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THE  
RIOT ACT

A PLAY  
IN THREE ACTS




BY  
JAMES  
SEXTON

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# THE RIOT ACT



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# THE RIOT ACT

*A Play in Three Acts*

BY

JAMES SEXTON

LONDON

CONSTABLE AND COMPANY LIMITED

First published, July 1914  
Re-issued, October 1915



(THE CHARACTERS IN THE ORDER OF THEIR  
APPEARANCE.)

DUNNE (Chief Clerk at Office of the National Quayside  
Workers' Union).

MISS VAUGHAN (Typist at Office of the National Quayside  
Workers' Union).

MR. CUNLIFFE, J.P. (General Secretary of the National  
Quayside Workers' Union).

WARING (Leader of Deputation).

DOBSON

DUCKFIELD

KING

REILLY

CONOLLY

} Members of Committee.

MADDOCKS (Labour Leader).

THE LORD MAYOR.

MR. MOGG (Magistrate).

DOCKERS, COMMITTEE MEMBERS, MAGISTRATES, NURSE.

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ACT I.

*Buildings of the National Quayside Workers.*

SCENE I.—General Secretary's Room.

SCENE II.—Meeting Room District Council.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—Magistrates' Meeting Room.

SCENE II.—General Secretary's Room.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—Strike Committee Rooms.

SCENE II.—General Secretary's Room.



# THE RIOT ACT

## ACT I.

### SCENE I.

SCENE.—*The Private Office of the General Secretary at the Headquarters of the National Quayside Workers' Union.*

*It is well but simply furnished with a solid square table, upholstered in brown leather. On the left, near the fireplace, is an ordinary half-backed office chair in front of the table, to the left of which stands the desk telephone on the table.*

*On the opposite side of the table is another chair, evidently meant for the use of the Shorthand Clerk and Typist.*

*On the wall, at the left, is a well-stocked bookcase.*

*The other walls are covered with maps and photographs or caricatures from "Vanity Fair" of well-known Labour M.P.'s.*

*At the back the clerks can be seen in the General*

*Office through the glass partition, through which there is a door leading into the General Secretary's room.*

*When the curtain rises, the Lady Typist and Shorthand Clerk ENTERS with the morning correspondence, all of which, with the exception of one letter bearing the inscription on the envelope O.H.M.S., are open.*

TYPIST. On His Majesty's Service.

*This evidently attracts the clerk, who fingers it longingly and turns it over several times. Her curiosity getting the better of her discretion, she turns her back to the glass partition, runs her thumb through the envelope, takes out the letter and reads it with a look of surprise and satisfaction.*

*Comes down to below L. of table, puts letter on table, and deliberately takes its contents down in Shorthand, and then puts the document under the pile of already opened correspondence on the table when the chief clerk, Mr. DUNNE, ENTERS. DUNNE looks enquiringly at the Shorthand Clerk and the open note-book.*

DUNNE (*comes down R. of table*). Has Mr. Cunliffe arrived?

MISS V. (*L. of table*). No.

DUNNE. Then why, may I ask, are you taking notes in his absence?

MISS V. (*With indignation, closing note-book*). You may ask, but it does not follow that I am compelled to

answer you. I have my instructions from Mr. Cunliffe, and do not recognise your authority in this respect at least.

DUNNE: Very well. (*Moving down R., shuts door.*) I shall ask Mr. Cunliffe what your instructions are. (*She makes a move to leave.*) By the way, Miss Vaughan, my authority at least extends to the charwoman and the junior clerks. I suppose you will admit that.

MISS V. (*sarcastically*). Why, yes, certainly. I should say that was your natural element.

DUNNE (*wincing. Up towards Miss V.*) Then you will, in future, please abstain, during office hours at least, from giving them lectures on the subject of votes for women and the policy of the W.S.P.U. The charwoman is getting unbearable, since you put such notions into her head.

MISS V. I suppose I have your permission out of office hours to an expression of my political opinion, even to the charwoman?

DUNNE (*goes to above table to sort papers*). I have no control over you in that. I wish I had, as I detest your politics heartily.

MISS V. (*spiritedly*). No doubt you would wish all women to be as subject to your will as your own tame doll of a wife. (*Goes out at back, banging the door, at which the clerks can be seen looking up from their desks and grinning.*) (DUNNE sorts papers on desk as CUNLIFFE ENTERS.)

CUNLIFFE. Good morning, Dunne. (*Comes down to L. of table.*)

DUNNE. Good morning, sir. (*Rises, slams book on desk.*)

CUNLIFFE (*seating himself at desk, taking up letter and looking at DUNNE*). Anything wrong?

DUNNE. Not exactly wrong, sir.

CUNLIFFE. A rather qualified answer, isn't it?

DUNNE. Perhaps it is, sir; but Miss Vaughan has been somewhat impertinent.

CUNLIFFE. H'm, so that accounts for her flurried look and the slamming of the door.

DUNNE (*indignantly*). You surely do not mean to infer that I——

CUNLIFFE (*smiling*). My dear Dunne, I infer nothing, but we are all human, and Miss Vaughan is a very attractive woman.

DUNNE. There is no attraction about her for me. On the contrary, she and all her sect repel me.

CUNLIFFE. Her sect? I don't understand.

DUNNE. She's a militant W.S.P.U., and she is continually preaching the policy to the junior clerks, and has so demoralised the charwoman that there is no getting any good out of her. Only yesterday she told me she was as good a man as me; and that her two sons were finical members of the Amalgamated Society and were paying my wages and keeping me here.

(CUNLIFFE *lies back and laughs.*)

(*Smiling also.*) Yes, I admit, sir, it has its comic side, but it is sapping the discipline of the office, and this concerns me very much. This morning, for instance, I found Miss Vaughan in here alone looking over the correspondence, and, if I mistake not, taking private notes. When I challenged her, she informed me that she had her instructions from you.

CUNLIFFE. H'm, yes, I confess, I am partly responsible for that. I told Miss Vaughan, or by the way, it was her own suggestion, I think, that to save time all correspondence but that marked private should be opened and brought in here when she came to take my dictation. Have you any objection?

DUNNE. None, sir, except that I do not trust her.

CUNLIFFE. You're a married man, aren't you, Dunne?

DUNNE. Why, yes, sir. You gave me a wedding present.

CUNLIFFE (*suddenly remembering*). Why, of course I did. I beg your pardon, but the claims of Democracy upon one's memory make one apt to forget these small domestic details. And what does your wife think of the Woman's Question?

DUNNE. My wife thinks as I do, sir.

CUNLIFFE. Ah, then you're a fortunate fellow, Dunne! (*Resumes his correspondence.*) Tell Miss Vaughan to come in.

(DUNNE goes away into outer office and MISS VAUGHAN ENTERS. She sits down, R. of table, opens her book and smiles on him seductively.)

CUNLIFFE. Good morning.

MISS V. Good morning. (*Sits R. of table.*)

CUNLIFFE. No, never mind your note-book just yet. (*Closes it slowly with a look of surprise. Places it on the table, leans towards him with her elbow on the table and her chin in her hand.*) You and Mr. Dunne have quarrelled this morning, I understand.

MISS V. The quarrel was all on Mr. Dunne's side. He is continually jibing and sneering at the agitation for Women's Franchise in which I am deeply interested. I would rather take my orders from you (*meaningly*), for you at least understand and sympathise with me and the movement.

CUNLIFFE (*surprised*). I certainly do. But I also sympathise with Mr. Dunne's objection to discussion on the subject with the charwoman and the junior clerks during office hours.

MISS V. (*sharply*). It is Mr. Dunne's personal prejudice against *myself* that prompts his opposition.

CUNLIFFE. Don't you think your conduct during office hours has something to do with it? And if without entering upon a general discussion of the question I might also venture to say that it is most repulsive to see and even to hear of otherwise decent and respectable women



like yourself jostling policemen and being frog-marched to the bridewell. (*Rises—to above table.*)

Believe me, I have the greatest respect for you. In fact, I think very highly of you. And it is with a feeling almost of horror that I even contemplate the possibility of you being subjected to such treatment. Surely there is a more womanly and dignified method of protest.

MISS V. (*stretching her arm over towards him, pleadingly*). When you talk like that to me I feel as if I must do anything you ask. Why are some women denied the functions of real womanhood? Think of the tragedies of our lives, compelled to embrace excitement as an alternative to the embraces we have been denied! (*Speaking softly and pleadingly.*) But I'll give it all up if you wish it.

CUNLIFFE. I have been wondering whether you really and truly appreciate the force of what you have just said. I have an old-fashioned reverence for your sex, and I should not like to think that all this is simply a physical rebellion against conventional sexual relations. (*Pausing.*) (*To L. of table.*) Now take my advice, take the day off, go home and calm yourself like a good woman. (*Sits.*)

MISS V. (*Up to door—turns towards the door, stops with the knob in her hand, straightens herself, looks at him defiantly as she goes out. CUNLIFFE rings the bell and DUNNE enters to above table.*)

CUNLIFFE. Miss Vaughan is going home for the day, Dunne.

DUNNE (*above table*). Yes, sir—— (*hesitates*) ——Er——

CUNLIFFE (*anticipating*). Well?

DUNNE. If I might be allowed to say so, sir, we should be better without her altogether.

CUNLIFFE. Come, come, Dunne. You must be tolerant as becomes the servant of a democratic institution, and respect other people's opinions if you do not agree with them.

DUNNE. It all depends upon what you mean by democratic and democracy, sir.

CUNLIFFE. Why, Dunne, I'm surprised at you. You, the representative of a trade union, and not to know the meaning of Democracy.

DUNNE (*smiling meaningly*). I should be obliged for your definition, sir.

CUNLIFFE. Why, certainly. Democracy, my dear Dunne, means the free, outspoken desire of the people on any great question. The government of the people, for the people, by the people. In other words, Dunne, democracy means Democracy. Why, it's our patent reversible stock peroration, warranted to fit any audience, any speech, any subject without shrinking, and without which no public meeting is complete. Surely you see its importance.

DUNNE. Yes, its importance is all right, but it is not very illuminating, if I may say so. (*Moves up to door.*)

CUNLIFFE. H'm. I'm afraid you're a sad heretic, Dunne.

(DUNNE goes out without answering.)

(Telephone bell rings at CUNLIFFE'S left hand.)

*He takes up the receiver—speaks.)*

Yes—all right—put him through. Hallo—yes, I'm speaking now. Men all out at North End—. What for? Eh? They don't know—then what did they come out for? Eh? Because someone told them—Well, yes, yes, but who told them? They don't know—Yes—came over the hatch—yes—told them to put their coats on and come up to Hell out of that and they, of course, came. (*Laughing.*) Just like their dear democratic hearts. (*Sharply.*) Eh, what? They want strike pay—Coming up here, are they? Well, tell them then to save themselves the trouble—You've told them—and they still insist on coming—on their way now, are they? H'm, very well. (*Rings off, begins to look at correspondence, telephone rings again.*) Yes. Yes. Oh, the Shipping Navigation Company—Yes, men all out—Yes. I've heard about it—Eh? What am I going to do to make them go back? Have you asked them? Told you they'd see you in Hell first—Well, what can I do in that case? Yes, yes, of course I don't attempt to justify them. We shall deal with them according to rule. Yes. Yes. I know that won't get your work started. Eh? Yes. Yes. You may take a horse to the water but you can't make him drink if he

doesn't want to. I've got the matter in hand and will do my best. (*Rings off.*) (*Loud voices are heard outside demanding an interview.* CUNLIFFE presses the bell. DUNNE ENTERS.) Well?

DUNNE. The Democracy—— I beg pardon, sir. The deputation from the North End. Shall I say you're engaged?

CUNLIFFE. No, you'd better show them in.

DUNNE. Very good, sir. (*Goes out, but returns immediately with a note-book in his hand, followed by four men in their working clothes as if they had just come from the Dock. The leading man, evidently the spokesman for the others, is named WARING, a bushy-browed, black-whiskered man with sunken eyes.*)

CUNLIFFE. Be seated, gentlemen.

(DUNNE seats himself at the table at right angles to CUNLIFFE while the men sit facing CUNLIFFE on R. wall. DUNNE takes out his note-book and begins to sharpen his pencil.)

WARING (*aggressively*). Here, none o' that, Cunliffe. We're not gentlemen, but plain working men whose hard-earned coppers goes to keep the like o' you. We're just comrades, ain't we, mates?

DEPUTATION. Hear, hear, comrade; that's so.

WARING. So we wants no palaver and (*looking at DUNNE*), what's more, we want none of yer flunkeys taking notes, either, do we, comrades?

DEPUTATION. Hear! Hear! That's so, comrade.

WARING. (*Sits R. of table.*) We've not come here to be trapped, but to talk to you as man to man.

(*Men sit R.*)

CUNLIFFE. As four men to one, you mean. And now, Waring, if you will proceed without any further impertinence, I am willing to listen to what you've got to say.

WARING. You're our servant, and you've got to listen to us.

DEPUTATION. Hear, hear! That's so, comrade.

CUNLIFFE. You are not helping either yourself or me by such an attitude.

WARING. Very well, we'll leave that where it is for the present and get to business. We've come about the strike.

CUNLIFFE. What strike? I've heard of none.

WARING. Oh, yes, you have. Now don't deny it.

CUNLIFFE. I am not aware of any strike officially.

WARING. You know the men have all knocked off?

CUNLIFFE. So I am informed.

WARING. Well, what do you mean by sayin' there is no strike?

CUNLIFFE. I repeat there is no strike officially, and that you and the men have acted contrary to rule.

WARING. Oh, yes, we've heard of your red tape (*Down*) before now, and the men are sick of it. Who makes the rules, I'd like to know, but you and your

pals. (Hear, hear! *from one of the DEPUTATION.*) What we want is 'malgamation and solidarity.

REILLY. Hear! Hear!

CUNLIFFE. Every member of the Union has an opportunity of participating in the making of the rules, and in fact, does participate. You particularly have had a hand in framing these particular ones.

WARING. That's a lie, and you know it.

DEPUTATION. Hear! Hear! It's a lie, that's so.

CUNLIFFE. Your description of yourself and comrades is quite right, Waring. You are not gentlemen. Dunne, get me the minute book and two copies of the printed Congress minutes with the slips issued daily to delegates.

DUNNE. Yes, sir. (*Gets Minute book and Galley Slips.*)

CUNLIFFE (*selecting one of the slips, leans over the table and shows WARING a signature on the bottom of the slip*). Is that your signature?

WARING (*surlily*). It looks like it. Suppose it is, what then?

CUNLIFFE. This. (*Reading from Galley Slip.*) Mr. Waring moved that Clause 6 of Rule 12 be amended to read as follows: No member shall knock off work for any reason or under any circumstances without being specially authorised by the Branch Committee to which he belongs. Any member infringing this rule shall be liable to a fine in any sum up to £5 or to expulsion from the Union. Signed correct, J. Waring.

WARING. Here, let's have done with this hanky panky. You can quote rules any way to suit yourself. The men are out in a good cause, and their wives and children want food. So what are you going to do about it, that's what we want to know?

DEPUTATION (*feebly*). 'Ear, 'ear. That's so.

CUNLIFFE. I am going to do nothing. (*Murmurs of disappointment.*) And as to the cause being good, I have not yet heard what the cause is.

WARING. Never mind what it is. Are you going to give 'em strike pay? (*All men lean forward.*)

CUNLIFFE. Certainly not. (*Murmurs from men.*)

WARING (*rises, leans on table*). Then, by God, the men shall know about it, that's all.

CUNLIFFE. Mr. Dunne, will you kindly show these people to the door. (*Men rise—step forward.*)

WARING (*threateningly to DUNNE*). Yes, come on, young 'un, show us the door, but be careful how you do it, or it might be bad for your health. (*To CUNLIFFE and thumping the table.*) I'd have you know, Mr. Cunliffe, that this is our office, our money that keeps it up and pays you and, by God, we shall leave just as soon as we like, and no sooner.

DEPUTATION. 'Ear! 'Ear! that's so. (*They sit down truculently.*) (*WARING to men over R.C. table.*)

CUNLIFFE. Put me on to the Exchange, please, Mr. Dunne. (*DUNNE goes into outer Office. CUNLIFFE takes up telephone.*)

CUNLIFFE. Is that Exchange? Put me on to 326 Central, please. No. No mistake. The C division Police Depot.

WARING (*threateningly*). Damn you for a cold-blooded cur. I've a good mind to make it a police job. What say, lads?

(DEPUTATION *also rising*.) 'Ear, 'ear, that is so. (MEN *rise and come forward*.)

CUNLIFFE (*while speaking through the 'phone, has quietly opened a drawer to his right, from which he now produces a revolver, and leaning his elbow on the table, covers them with it, while continuing to speak through the 'phone*). Is that C Division? This is Mr. Cunliffe speaking—Yes, will you kindly send two or three handy men down here to remove four rowdies who are threatening me in the Office?

(WARING *growls and makes a move, but is immediately pulled up by the revolver*.)

(DUNNE *appears at the door, comes down to table, alarmed by the noise*.)

For goodness' sake, Dunne, shut the door, and get out of the firing line. This thing might go off.

(DUNNE *shuts the door half way, holding it in his hand*.)

What? You've only got two men handy! O, Jujitsu men, are they? They'll do nicely, thank you.



Coming now, are they? Thanks very much. (*Rises, steps back L.*) (MEN start for door slowly.)

WARING (*going towards door with Deputation*). All right, Mr. Cunliffe. You've got to the wind'ard of us this time (*men go off first*) but you've not done with us yet. (*At door.*) We'll fix you at the next Annual Meeting.

(*They go out slamming the door.*) (DUNNE L. of door.)

CUNLIFFE. You didn't put me through to the Police Station, did you, Dunne?

DUNNE (*comes down C.*). No, sir. I thought you—

CUNLIFFE. Quite right. You anticipated me (*laughing*). How the curs slunk away with their tails hanging. (*Contemplatively.*) Dunne, you're an invaluable fellow. (*Taking his hand and putting his other on his shoulder.*) But I'm just a bit afraid that your heresy is a bit contagious.

DUNNE. I hope so, sir. (*Turns, goes up to door.*)

*End of Scene I.*

ACT I.

SCENE II.

SCENE.—*Meeting Room of the National Quayside Workers' District Council, an adjunct to the General Office in the previous scene.*

*There are two windows at the back and a door in the centre between the windows leading to the General Office by a Corridor on the left.*

*Masts of ships are seen in the distance through the windows, and the roar of traffic is heard.*

*The room is plainly furnished with a long table in the centre with chairs all round it. A place for Chairman at end L. Secretary is at the end.*

*On the wall are hung numerous files, and at the left a folding Secretary's desk with pigeon holes on each side of it.*

*At the Chairman's right hand there is a table telephone.*

*The Secretary sits on the right while on the table are the minute book and a correspondence file.*

*As curtain rises, MISS VAUGHAN is discovered typing at table.*

*Enter WARING ; since the last scene he has been elected District Secretary with a salary, by the malcontents who are opposing CUNLIFFE, and in consequence is well dressed as becomes the position.*

MISS VAUGHAN (*seated*). Well, sir ?

WARING. Good evening, Miss. It seems I'm a bit early.

MISS VAUGHAN. It all depends who you are, and what you're here for.

WARING (*smiling condescendingly*). Well, Miss, I happen to be the District Secretary ; my name is Waring, and I understood Mr. Cunliffe had called a meeting here.

MISS VAUGHAN. O yes, I beg your pardon. It's about the strike.

WARING. Yes.

MISS VAUGHAN. Ah, yes. Mr. Cunliffe has gone to meet Mr. Maddocks. Won't you sit down ?

WARING. Thank you. (*Sits down*). I suppose, now, you happen to be a good deal in Mr. Cunliffe's confidence ?

MISS V. (*sharply*). Suppose I am, what then ?

WARING. O, nothing, except he'll want all the confidence he can get to see this job through. There's rough work in front of him and he'll want all his friends.

MISS V. Are you one of his friends ?

WARING (*pausing and looking at her searchingly*). I hope so.

MISS V. So do I, and you ought to be proud of his friendship. (*With warmth.*) A more devoted, unselfish advocate of working men does not exist.

WARING (*smiling*). Ah, yes. If everyone thought as you do, his task would be a bit easier ; but unfortunately that is not the case, Miss.

MISS V. Yes, it is unfortunate, nay, more, it's tragic, that he should be giving his whole life to the service of men who do not appreciate the sacrifice.

WARING. Nay, come now, Miss, aren't you rather hard on the men ? Ours is a democratic institution, and even leaders some time or other have that fact forced upon them. I recognise with you Mr. Cunliffe's ability ; but he's not badly paid for it. His ability, however, as you call it—his despotism, as some of *us* call it—is out of place in this case. He's opposed to the strike, and the men are determined on it.

MISS V. So you think he's well paid, do you ? Why, all the money in the Union, or in the whole Trade Union movement, is not enough recompense for his services. He's simply wasting his opportunities. (*Scornfully.*) You talk of your miserable monetary reward ; why, even now if he liked he could secure an appointment where his ability would be adequately recognised ; where he would be free from the turmoil, intrigue, and

petty jealousy he is subject to, and where his salary would be quadrupled.

WARING. What do you mean?

MISS V. I mean what I say—but there, I've said enough, perhaps more than I ought. (*Rising.*) One thing, however, you may be sure his friends (*with emphasis*), his real friends, will see to it that should this miserable intrigue against him succeed, the latest opportunity shall not be lost sight of. And now you'll excuse me; my time is up. (*Packing up the typing machine, taking it by the handle and going up to door; Centre.*) I must make room for the Democracy. (*Pausing at door.*) Good evening. (*Exit.*)

WARING. The typist is evidently spoons on the General. (*Laughs sardonically.*) I shouldn't wonder if he—(*catches sight of Board of Trade letter; picks it up and reads it with a smile of triumph.*) H'm, so this is what the little spitfire had in her mind. Good. We must develop this if possible.

(*Noise of men talking in outer lobby is heard.*)

WARING *puts Board of Trade letter under others and retires to fireplace; stands with his back to it as other members of Committee enter. They seat themselves at table with WARING, talking generally about the pending crisis.*)

WARING (*going over to table*). Comrades, it's time we

commenced business. It's five minutes past the time, and the Chairman ought to show a good example. I move that Duckfield takes the chair. (*Sits again.*)

DOBSON (*rises*). I second that. (*Sits.*)

REILLY. Hear! hear!

DUCKFIELD (*rises*). Just 'ole on a minute, boys. I'm Vice-Chairman, I knows, but the Chairman's had this business in hand all along, and we can't get on widout him. 'Ow do we know but he's got some special business on 'and. He's usually punctual and he'll be here in a minute or two, I've no doubt. (*Sits again.*)

WARING (*rises*). Yes, he's always special business on, has Mr. Cunliffe, too special, in my 'umble opinion. A nice how d'ye do when the Vice-Chair is not taken into his confidence. I press my motion. All in favour. (*A few hands go up slowly, others are following.*)

KING (*jumping up excitedly, looking fiercely at WARING.*)  
(WARING *sits.*) Here, just wait a minute. Who the H—— are you, I'd like to know, to give orders? (*With contempt.*) Why you're only a dog watch on the job anyhow—pitchforked on to this Committee a few days ago when the trouble commenced by yourself and a few of your pals (*looking witheringly at WARING.*) Besides, it's a dirty bird that fouls its own nest.

WARING (*rising in a threatening manner*). Do you mean that for me?

KING. If the cap fits ye, ye can wear it. (*With contempt.*) Ye always were a *no mark* anyhow, and the

gang you were in was always a man short. Keep what ye have to say till the man's here, and say it to his face. *(Sits.)*

WARING. I intend to say it to his face, and, what's more, I'll have something to say to you when I get outside.

KING *(jumping up again and pushing his chair away excitedly gets to C.)*. No time and place like the present. I'm yer man, ye toe rag! Shift the table, boys. *(Taking his coat off and throwing it on the floor. All the men rise at the table.)* Come on, ye skunk! Just make a heap of yer clothes here, and we'll finish the argument.

*(REILLY stops WARING.)*

*(DUCKFIELD intervenes to stem the uproar, turns to C., when CUNLIFFE enters C. followed by DUNNE and MADDOCKS, a middle-sized, stoutly built, but apparently active man with a black moustache and the piercing eyes of a fanatic. When CUNLIFFE enters the hubbub ceases at once, all quietly sinking into their seats but KING, who sheepishly picks up his coat and grins.)*

CUNLIFFE *(comes down C.)*. Now then, what's all this row about? *(No one answers.)* Aren't you ashamed of yourselves? *(No answer.)* Well, I'm ashamed for you. Is this the time you should be quarrelling among yourselves? Now, King, what is your explanation of the extraordinary attitude I found you in?

KING. Me and that fellow over there had an argument and I lost my temper.

CUNLIFFE. I wish to Heaven, King, you would lose what temper you've got and get a new one. (*Over above table to L. of it MADDOCKS follows to above L., DUNNE below sits L.*) Now let's have done with this. We have serious business on hand. Take your seats. (*They resume their seats.*) With your permission we'll dispense with the minutes of the last Meeting. This is a special Meeting. Mr. Dunne, please take shorthand notes of the proceedings. First let me introduce my friend, Tom Maddocks.

DUCKFIELD. We all know him. (*They all rise and cheer with cries of "Good old Tom."*)

CUNLIFFE (*smiling*). I see he needs no introduction from me. All the same he is my apology for being late. We have been talking matters over and we are not in entire agreement as to the policy. I, however, agreed that Mr. Maddocks should put his case to you.

MADDOCKS (*rising, at which cheers break out afresh*). Comrades all!

WARING. 'Ear! 'Ear!

MADDOCKS. I am here as the representative of the seamen to ask you to assist them in their fight for better conditions. There is no difference between myself and Cunliffe on that, but simply on the methods of securing it. He seems to think that before rushing into this dispute which is bound to involve you, that you should



have been consulted. And there is some force in his argument, I admit, under existing circumstances. But I am out to change existing circumstances. They are obsolete.

DOBSON. 'Ear! 'Ear!

MADDOCKS. The time has now come for solidarity. Industrial solidarity.

WARING. Ay, solidarity, that's it.

MADDOCKS. You have trusted too much to the Parliamentarian, and he has spoofed you every time. Look at the Colonies. They have what you are aiming at here—Labour politics, in fact Labour Government and Cabinets. And yet the lot of the workers in the Colonies is no better than yours here. I am out to advocate the spirit of revolt, red hot revolutionary revolt against the Capitalist system.

CROWD. 'Ear! 'Ear!

MADDOCKS. Comrades, put not your trust in either Princes or Politicians. They are of the same brand. The workers in the Transport trade if they act together can paralyse the industry of the country. Now is your time. Let your watchword be Solidarity, Solidarity, and again Solidarity, and the victory is yours.

*(He sits down and the whole of the Council except  
CUNLIFFE and DUNNE and DUCKFIELD  
rise and cheer him to the echo.)*

CUNLIFFE *(rising)*. I anticipated that my friend Maddocks had lost none of the power of his youth. I

also am an idealist, as he is, with this difference. My friend Maddocks has been a free lance without any responsibility. Solidarity, yes, by all means, if you like, but let us have discipline; for you cannot have one without the other and I claim that the solidarity of Maddocks lacks the one essential item—discipline.

WARING. But not bosses!

CUNLIFFE. Let me put Maddocks' case (*turning to MADDOCKS*), if I may be allowed the liberty.

MADDOCKS. Go on!

CUNLIFFE. Maddocks would have you abandon legislative effort. He mistrusts even the political Labour Party.

MADDOCKS. I do, absolutely.

CUNLIFFE. Quite so, and he would in place of that substitute a system by which the workmen of the country would take over and manage the industries for themselves and so abolish the Capitalist. And he tells you the time has now arrived for that.

WARING. Hear, hear. So it has, Comrades.

CUNLIFFE. I have heard that familiar phrase for the last twenty years. I have joined in the Labour Hymn, "England arise, the long, long night is over," at elections where we have only secured twenty-five votes out of as many thousands on the register, until I have become convinced that both of them have developed into mere cant phrases.

WARING. That's because you've ratted.

KING (*rising excitedly*). Look here, Waring, what we want is your silence, and d——d little of that. (*Prolonged laughter.*) I've told ye what I think iv ye before.

CUNLIFFE. Sit down, King, and leave this matter to me.

(KING *sinks reluctantly into his seat glowering at WARING.*)

The time has not yet arrived and the night from an industrial point of view is still with us. How does Maddocks propose to dispel the darkness? He talks of a strike as the dispelling force. Why the one thin ray of light we have as yet seen is in a general sense political action.

DUCKFIELD (*rising*). Mr. Chair, through you I rise to a point of order. No politics. Wot I sez is, put it to your general body.

DOBSON. 'Ear! 'Ear! No politics.

CUNLIFFE. We'll get on much quicker if you'll allow me to finish.

MADDOCKS. Now, now, Brothers, be good boys. Let Cunliffe go on.

CUNLIFFE. Political action has been the weapon of our common enemy the Capitalist for centuries. With it and through it he has worked his sweet will upon us all. He makes the laws in the House of Commons and administers them in your town, city and parish councils. To back this up, he has both the civil and military forces under his control recruited from your own flesh and

blood to shoot you down on order. What chance have you, may I ask, with your naked hands and undisciplined forces against such as this?

KING. Hear, hear. By G—d, he's right. (*Excitedly.*)

CUNLIFFE. Talk of Solidarity, you have it in the Capitalist system. To change it you will have to adopt Capitalist methods and secure control of their weapons constitutionally. To attempt any other way would mean establishing more firmly than ever the system you wish to destroy. There is not an organisation represented here but has its agreements with employers and is bound to give notice. Agreements are, I admit, sometimes inconvenient things. They happen to be now.

MADDOCKS (*smiling*). Then get shut of 'em.

CUNLIFFE. Yes, it is easy for you to talk like that, but we have entered into them, and as honourable men we should carry them out.

DUCKFIELD. 'Ear, 'Ear. That's what I sez, consult your general body.

CUNLIFFE. I have every respect for my friend's opinion, the suggestion is heroic, but it is not war. And when you go to war with the Capitalist you must have an organised and well-disciplined force, coupled with the sinews of war and the ammunition. In this case you have neither, while the enemy are fully prepared at any time. The enemy knows your weakness.

KING. How does he know?

CUNLIFFE. Because in your blind, stupid pride you have provided him with that knowledge by Act of Parliament, viz. :—the Trade Union Act, by which you are bound to make out a return of your financial position every year, and which he can demand on the payment of 1s.

Given, for argument's sake, the system my friend wishes for, viz. :—industrial control of the industries by the workmen, you will still want your Executives to direct and control, or as Waring calls them “bosses.” How could you expect to direct and control otherwise? And yet you are asked to throw all present constituted authority into the melting pot.

MADDOCKS. There comes a time in the history of all constitutions when rebellion is justified, and this may be one of them.

CUNLIFFE. This, in my opinion, is not one of them; and it is because of this, and because in my opinion you would dispel the small ray of light that is beginning to pierce the night, and make it as black as Hell again, that I am opposed to the policy of the general strike, without the slightest organisation or preparation. (CUNLIFFE resumes his seat in silence.)

DUCKFIELD. (*Pause. Rising slowly and speaking ponderously.*) Mr. Chair, wot I wants to say is this 'ere. I believes in my general body. I sez to it, sez I, the sailors are out and we in, sez I. The sailors comes to me and sez, “What are ye goin' to do?”

“Consult my general body,” sez I, and so there you are. Mr. Maddocks comes to the meeting, and the plank of progress is ripe for plucking, and he makes a speech and my general body sez, “Come out,” and there ye are. (*Sits again.*)

KING (*rising*). Through you, Mr. Chair, what Tom Duckfield sez is the God’s truth, and if the carters come out, why it stands to sense we’re bound to follow. We can’t load carts for scabs, can we?

CROWD. No. No.

KING. In fact, the men on the Docks are our mates. We work with ’em, and as members of the Ex-ecu-tive we are ’avin’ a hell of a time with ’em. The meetin’s that Maddocks addressed were solid with him, and while we all sees the force of what you sez, of course what are we to do? (*Sits again.*)

DUCKFIELD. Put it to your general body, that’s wot I sez.

DOBSON. ’Ear. ’Ear.

CUNLIFFE (*rising*). Well, gentlemen, the matter is now in your hands. What is your pleasure?

*(They all look sheepishly at one another and then at the Chairman.)*

Is anyone prepared to move a resolution? Come now, you have surely thought the matter out.

KING (*rising*). That’s just it, Mr. Chair. We haven’t quite thought it out. Can’t you frame something in the way of a resolution?

CUNLIFFE. Yes, if you wish it. (*Sits again.*) (*Dictates*

to DUNNE, *who takes it down.*) This Executive Council, while sympathising with the wishes of the Seamen and Firemen and with their request to take general action, think the time has not yet arrived when we can justify calling a general strike of our members.

*(Pause.)*

*(There is another long pause during which the members look at each other and appealingly at the Chairman.)*

KING *(rising)*. But through Mr. Chair begging pardon. That's not the kind of thing we want. Couldn't you do a bit of bluff so as to make it appear we *were* coming out? *(Grinning sheepishly.)* You know what I mean.

CUNLIFFE. Your bluff is a dangerous and vicious policy. It means strike pay, of which you haven't got more than one week to give them—and after that—well—I leave the result to your intelligence. The resolution is open to amendment. *(KING sits again.)*

REILLY *(rising)*. Are we entitled to move an amendment that “we *do* strike in sympathy”?

CUNLIFFE. You are, but you do it with a full sense of your responsibility, and I shall vote against it.

*(REILLY sits again.)*

*(Another long silence, during which the members whisper together.)*

KING. *(Rising. Acting as spokesman.)* Does that mean, Mr. Chair, that you will publish your voting against the amendment?

CUNLIFFE *(shaking his head)*. No, King, it does not.

It will be merely recorded on the minutes and not for publication. *(The members give a sigh of relief.)*

KING. Again, sir, through you. Does it mean that you will take no part in the strike if the amendment is carried? *(Sits.)*

CUNLIFFE. I have been debating in my own mind what my attitude should be under the conditions, and I have come to the conclusion *(they all lean forward anxiously)* that, under normal circumstances, I should resign my position.

KING *(rising)*. Then I withdraw. *(Sits again.)* Wait a moment. I appreciate your loyalty. Circumstances are abnormal. I have never run away from a fight yet. And so I have made up my mind, though opposed to the policy, to help to see it through at all costs, and consider my position afterwards.

*(All rise except DUNNE.) (Cheer.)*

KING *(jumping to his feet excitedly, the other members also standing up)*. By God, I always said you were a man. Straight as a gun barrel!

CUNLIFFE. There, there, don't get excited. *(All sit again.)* We shall all want to keep our heads until this thing is over. Now I'll put the amendment first, if somebody will move it.

REILLY. I beg to move that we do come out in sympathy with Seamen and Firemen.

WARING. I second that.

CUNLIFFE. All in favour. *(All hands go up slowly)*



*as if ashamed of it.*) Record me as dissenting, Mr. Dunne, please.

DUNNE (*reading*). All members voted for the amendment, Mr. Cunliffe dissenting.

CUNLIFFE. That's all the business, gentlemen.

*(They go out. DUNNE rises, gets to R. of table, collects papers, puts chairs back. CUNLIFFE and MADDOCKS remain.)*

MADDOCKS. (*Rises, puts hand on CUNLIFFE'S shoulder.*) Come, come, old man. Buck up and fight the devils. What's become of your old self? We are in for a glorious victory, I tell you. Solidarity, my boy. Solidarity. Shall you be at the meeting to-morrow?

CUNLIFFE. No, don't count on me for to-morrow. I shall think it over. You'll excuse me. I've some arrears to pull up.

MADDOCKS. Certainly, old chap. I'm jolly glad you've come into it.

CUNLIFFE (*smiling*). You're jolly glad you've got me into it, you mean. I'm not. Good-night.

MADDOCKS. Good-night, you old fossil. (*Moves up to door, turns.*) You'll be as vigorous as ever once you're in the fight. I know you. (*He goes out.*)

*(CUNLIFFE, who has seen him to the door, goes back and drops wearily into the chair.)*

DUNNE. (*R. of table.*) (*Who has been collecting the*

*papers.*) Have you *looked* at the last few days' correspondence, sir?

CUNLIFFE. No, Dunne. You know how fully my time's been taken up with this trouble. Is there anything special?

DUNNE. There's an important communication from the Board of Trade.

CUNLIFFE. What is it about?

(DUNNE *pulls out the letter, which he hands to CUNLIFFE, who, while reading it, smiles.*)

Have you read this, Dunne?

DUNNE (*R. of table*). Yes, sir, it's a splendid offer, if I may make so bold as to say it.

CUNLIFFE. Certainly you may. (*Smiling again a bit wearily.*) You may even make a suggestion, Dunne, if I am not detaining you.

DUNNE. Well, sir, if I thought my suggestion would have any weight, I should say take the post they offer you and get out of this eternal turmoil. Your democracy is an ungrateful animal. He will wear you out, as he has worn out others before you, and leave you stranded in the end.

CUNLIFFE (*looking at DUNNE steadily*). Dunne, why did you refuse that situation offered you a month back which would have taken you out of what you call the turmoil, and where your salary would have been substantially increased?

DUNNE (*embarrassed*). I—— why?—— How did you get to know, sir?

CUNLIFFE. Come now, Dunne, spare your blushes and answer me truly. Why did you refuse?

DUNNE. Well, sir, you know I've kind of grown up in the office with you and the work. You took me as an office-boy eighteen years ago at five shillings a week, and my salary is now, thanks to you, a comfortable one. It would be a wrench to leave you, sir. Besides, my wife thinks with me it would be ungrateful.

CUNLIFFE. Dunne, your wife is a jewel. Well, it is just for the same reason that I shall refuse the offer of the Board of Trade, tempting as it is. Like you, I've grown up with the work. In fact, I was born into it. All the members of my family were born agitators. It runs in our blood, Dunne. It's my natural element.

DUNNE. But could you not serve the movement equally by accepting the offer, sir?

CUNLIFFE. Ah, yes, Dunne; a very ingenious argument that. It's a bit of an ease to one's conscience, no doubt; but not so effective as one would make oneself believe. You get strangled with red tape. All one's good resolutions are smothered in appendices and schedules. It would never do. (*Meditatively.*) It would never, never do. Your true agitator is born, not made. Once the armour is buckled on he makes up his mind to die in harness, even though in the course of the fight he may be called upon to break a lance with the men whose cause he is fighting.

DUNNE. You have been called upon to do that, sir, more than once lately.

(MISS VAUGHAN opens the door, but seeing CUNLIFFE and DUNNE withdraws without being noticed by them.)

CUNLIFFE. Yes, and may have to, to the end, Dunne. No, Dunne, it won't do. (*Musingly.*) I look back upon my thirty years as an agitator with all its inconveniences, hardships, suspicions and fierce fights without one sigh of regret, and shall end it in the same spirit when the time comes. Where is the lure of the tame Government automaton, compared with the glory of the agitator's life? The dull routine of Acts of Parliament, Orders in Council, and Blue Books, as compared with the knowledge of power? We agitators, Dunne, are as powerful, comparatively, as His Majesty's Ministers, often more so. (*Rises—Enthusiastically.*) Why, think of it, you would have me give up the glory of the waiting audience, in the brilliantly lighted hall, the glow of satisfaction when the hum is hushed as we walk on to the platform. The power to mould such an audience to your wishes, the joy of dealing out retribution to the heckler, and the feeling of triumph, even of standing to be howled down—to become what?—a glorified policeman in plain clothes. (*Sits.*) No, it won't do. Good-night, Dunne. Turn out the lights in the outer office as you go.

DUNNE. (*Up to door.*) Good-night, sir. (*Turns.*) You're sure there is nothing I can do for you?

CUNLIFFE. No, nothing to-night, thanks. I'm just

going to have a wash and brush up, and then I'm going home. I feel rotten tired. Good-night.

(DUNNE goes out and turns the light out in outer office.)

(Sound of outer door closing.)

(CUNLIFFE takes stamp signature, puts in drawer, leaving keys in lock. Goes off into room R.)

(MISS VAUGHAN appears at glass partition, opens swing door cautiously and ENTERS.)

(She holds a paper in her hand, looks all round, goes stealthily to door through which CUNLIFFE has gone, and listens. Comes down C., then to below L. of table. Crosses below silently to E. of CUNLIFFE'S desk, shifts papers nervously as if looking for something, then perceiving keys, unlocks drawer and takes out stamped signature. Spreads the paper in her hand on the desk and presses the signature on the bottom of it and reads it.)

MISS V. The President Board of Trade. Yours obediently, James Cunliffe.

(CUNLIFFE is heard stirring in the room, he turns the knob of the door. MISS V. quickly switches off the light and crouches behind the bookcase.) (Up L.)

CUNLIFFE (speaking from the door). I could have sworn I left the light on.

(Comes down over below Table to L.)

*(Goes over to switch on light. Miss V. attempts to reach outer office without being seen, but stumbles against a chair. Steps back L. CUNLIFFE switches on light and turns at noise.)*

*(Surprised.) (To up R.C.)* Miss Vaughan. Why, what is the meaning of this? Why are you here at this time of night?

Miss V. *(hysterically)*. I—I had to co-come back. I couldn't help myself. I was, and am, miserable. *(Sways on her feet. L. of table.)*

CUNLIFFE *(places chair)*. Won't you sit down?

MISS V. *(recovering herself)*. No, I won't sit.

CUNLIFFE *(alarmed)*. My dear girl, you must see a doctor at once. You are run down.

MISS V. I don't want a doctor. *(Pauses and looks at him affectionately, half defiantly.)* I want you.

*(CUNLIFFE, going towards her in a responding mood, catches her hands, but suddenly pulls himself up and under control. Gets R. of table.)*

*(Miss V., hysterically. With great excitement.)*

*(He puts her hands down and moves R. then to below table.)*

CUNLIFFE. But can't you see that this is madness? You're out of sorts, unhinged, nervous. Forget all about me. I'm sure there's many a good fellow would be proud to call you his wife.

MISS V. (*fiercely*). I don't want a good fellow. I want a man who can command. (*Stretching out her hands.*) I want you. (*Defiantly.*) I don't ask you to marry me.

CUNLIFFE. Miss Vaughan, you're evidently not yourself to-night. (*She moves over in front of him to R. of table.*) Go home now, and have a good long rest for a few days. I realise all this means to you.

MISS V. I suppose you despise me.

CUNLIFFE (*a step to her*). No, I think far too much of you to take advantage of your present mood. Come now, I'll call a taxi. (*Turns to below table at 'phone.*)

MISS V. (*Moves up to door, turns. Softened by his attitude and struck with remorse.*) I—I have something here I want to show you. (*Takes paper out of her pocket.*)

CUNLIFFE. There, there, don't bother now. Perhaps you wouldn't want to let me see it when you think it over. (*Goes to telephone and takes up receiver.*)

MISS V. (*defiantly*). I don't want your taxi, and I can find my way out myself. (*Goes out and slams door in outer office.*)

(CUNLIFFE *sits down in chair at desk and mechanically places his hand on the stamp signature and looks at it—then at door.*)

*Slow Curtain.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

*(A Week Later.)*

SCENE.—*The Magistrates' meeting room in the Police Buildings on the first floor overlooking one of the main thoroughfares of the town. Through the two windows which are open, as it is a warm day, is heard the sound of the traffic. In the middle of the room there is a long table rounded at both ends.*

*The Chairman's seat is slightly raised above the others. There is also a chair for the Magistrates' Clerk placed next the Chairman's.*

*Between the table and the windows is another row of chairs, together with a long upholstered bench seat.*

*The only door to the room is on the left-hand side, with a large hat stand at the right-hand side of the door.*

*When the curtain rises, the seats around the table are being filled by the older members of the bench, and*



*the seats behind them by the younger according to seniority. An ATTENDANT stands at the door with a list, ticking off the names as they enter.*

*The MAGISTRATES greet each other.*

*There is a hum of conversation about the weather, the strike, its consequences, its probable termination.*

*This ceases instantly when the ATTENDANT announces*

ATTENDANT. Gentlemen, the Lord Mayor.

*Those seated rise and remain standing until the LORD MAYOR, bowing gravely and courteously, takes the chair.*

*There are a few moments' ominous silence. The LORD MAYOR, half risen from his seat to address the meeting, pauses as the noise of a great commotion is heard through the open windows. Shouts and booing, accompanied by the clatter of hoofs, get gradually louder. A company of mounted police, cavalry, and the tramp of infantry.*

*The MAGISTRATES on the seats between the table and the windows rush to the open window and look out.*

*At the sight of them the tumult rises, and the groans and boos rise to roars. A missile in the shape of a stout glass bottle crashes through the glass of the upper portion of the window, narrowly missing one of the MAGISTRATES, and falls on the floor of the room.*

*The LORD MAYOR, who has been standing during the passing of the troops calling sternly to the MAGISTRATES at the window :—*

LORD MAYOR. Gentlemen, will you take your seats, please? We have serious business to do. I trust you will bear it in mind during the remainder of the sitting.

*(The noise of the crowd and the tramp of the military die away in the distance.)*

MAGISTRATE *(who has been narrowly missed by the bottle, excitedly)*. But does your lordship see this? *(Holding up the bottle.)* Did your lordship notice how narrowly it escaped my head?

MAGISTRATES *(in chorus)*. A dastardly outrage! Monstrous!

LORD MAYOR. Yes, I saw it all, Mr. Mogg; but if your head was where it ought to be instead of where it was, both you and I and our colleagues would have been spared the indignity.

*(Slight murmurs of approval, and "Hear, hear," from a few seated at the table, while several at the back rise in protest.)*

*(Sternly.)* Order, order.

*(The protesters remain on their feet in half defiance.)*

*(Still sternly, but dignified.)* Please resume your seats, gentlemen.

*(With the exception of one or two all resume their seats.)*

*(MOGG to R. of table, puts bottle down. Sits.)*

*(Angry cries from the table, "Chair, Chair.")*

*(Those standing slowly resume their seats.)*

*(During the whole hub-bub CUNLIFFE has entered, comes down L. unnoticed by anyone, save the ATTENDANT. He looks in vain for a peg for his hat, and for a vacant seat near the door. His action is arrested by the rebuke of the LORD MAYOR. He stops in a half stooping posture with a look of agreeable surprise on his face. Being unable to find a seat, he leans against the panelling of the room and nods curtly to one or two of his colleagues, who salute him in dumb show, and listens as the CHAIRMAN continues to speak.)*

I deplore and condemn as strongly as any one of you the regrettable incident we have just witnessed. We are here to-day as the custodians of the peace and the administrators of justice. Circumstances have arisen which have compelled us to take the necessary steps to protect property and quell outrage. As Chief Magistrate of the City with yourselves we have a very painful but stern duty before us. I trust, therefore, that you will assist me to carry it out in a dignified and impartial manner. *(Sits again.)*

MOGG *(rising)*. But is your lordship aware that the leaders of the strike and the strike committee, one of whom is a member of this Bench and a Justice of the Peace, have actually had the impudence to issue permits for the distribution of food? *(Sits again.)*

*(Murmurs of indignation except from the MAGISTRATE leaning against the panels, who smiles grimly.)*

LORD MAYOR. *(Rises. Curtly.)* Yes, sir, I am quite aware of it. Notice has been sent to me by the Strike Committee. *(Sits.)*

MOGG *(rising excitedly)*. To a point of order, your lordship. Is it right that a member of the Strike Committee should be present at this meeting? How do we know—in fact, what is more likely than that all our plans will not be conveyed to the Strike Committee when this meeting is over?

LORD MAYOR *(sternly)*. Order, order. That is not a point of order. *(Rising.)*

*(MOGG sits.)*

*(Pointedly and looking direct at MOGG.)* We are all business men, but we are here simply as magistrates to-day, and are bound to rely upon each other's personal honour.

CUNLIFFE. I hope I shall prove worthy of your lordship's confidence, but I respectfully insist upon my legal right to be present here to-day.

LORD MAYOR. No one shall deny you that right, sir, while I am in authority.

*(CUNLIFFE bows but remains silent.)*

Gentlemen, I was about to say when interrupted that the effectiveness or otherwise of the stoppage of the

distribution of commodities would depend upon the effectiveness of the workmen's organisation.

*(Pauses and looks round. CUNLIFFE smiles grimly.)*

I see Mr. Cunliffe appreciates that.

*(CUNLIFFE bows, MOGG jumps up, but is quickly pulled down by his colleague.)*

I think, gentlemen, we are compelled to recognise the fact that the men's organisation is effective enough to entirely stop supplies.

*(Cries of "Shame," "Disgraceful," and general murmurs of indignation.)*

Gentlemen, the men are perfectly and legally entitled to cease work to enforce their demands.

MAGISTRATE. But not to stop supplies.

LORD MAYOR. That is not only an illogical but a foolish interjection. The men's action from their point of view to be effective can only be so by stopping supplies. To do this they are entitled even to go so far as to endeavour to persuade other men to assist them. But they are not legally entitled to use violence to prevent any other man who is willing to work, doing the work which they have refused to do. ("Hear, hear.") The forces at our disposal, are, I regret, not adequate to the occasion. Outrage is on the increase, and the City is threatened with darkness. I therefore submit the following resolution for your consideration: *(Reads.)*

That in view of the alarming spread of the trade disputes in the City, the increase of the number of lawless outrages and the destruction of property in consequence, the Home Secretary be at once requested to order the despatch of more troops ready for any emergency, and that all members of the Bench be requested to hold themselves in readiness to accompany the troops to any locality, and to be authorised to carry with them a copy of the Riot Act, with the object of preserving the peace and protecting the lives and property of the peaceful, law-abiding citizens.

*(Loud and continuous applause, during which his LORDSHIP resumes his seat.)*

MAGISTRATE (*rising*). I suppose my friend Mogg or any other member of the Bench may move an amendment?

(MAGISTRATES' CLERK *whispers to the* LORD MAYOR.)

LORD MAYOR (*rises*). If it is relative or germane to the resolution, yes. (*Sits.*)

MOGG (*rising*). My Lord Mayor, I beg to move the following amendment (*with a vicious look at CUNLIFFE*) that the word "requested" be deleted from the resolution and the word "demand" be substituted. There should be no hesitation in accepting this. Every member of the Bench on taking over his office takes his oath of allegiance and obedience to our Sovereign Lord the King and pledges to assist when called upon in the pre-

servation of the peace of his Majesty's lieges and the protection of their property. (*Another vicious look at CUNLIFFE.*) And the magistrate who shirks his duty in a time like this is unworthy any longer of holding the commission of a Justice of the Peace.

(*Resumes his seat amid loud applause.*)

ANOTHER MAGISTRATE. I beg to second that.

CUNLIFFE. (*Approaching the end of the table nearest him, placing his hands on the back of the chair upon which one of the MAGISTRATES is sitting, who half turns and looks at CUNLIFFE with an indignant but unspoken protest.*) My Lord Mayor.

ALL. (*Cries of*) Order, order! (*and*) Vote, vote.

LORD MAYOR. (*Rises.*) Gentlemen, I trust you will allow Mr. Cunliffe the same privilege we all claim of expressing ourselves on this subject, and not compel me to enforce my authority. (*Dead silence.*) Proceed, Mr. Cunliffe. (*Sits again.*)

CUNLIFFE. I should not have troubled you with many words had it not been for the amendment. There is not the slightest doubt in my mind that under existing circumstances the principle embodied in the resolution is necessary. (*Murmurs of applause.*) For though I may disagree, as I do, with the system of society as at present constituted, I am above all things a constitutionalist in the truest sense of the word. (*Murmurs of dissent.*) I believe the present state of society is the wrong state. Let me also frankly confess that industrial

warfare of the character we are now considering is not only economically unsound but cumbersome, costly, and disastrous, more so to the workman than the employer. But it is the only weapon to hand with which to strike the fear of consequences into the heart of the employer. (*Murmurs of dissent.*) It may not be palatable, but it is true. The workman as yet is tied to the chariot wheels of the political gods of his fathers. He will strike against immediate effects without any thought as to the real cause, which is political. Such being the case, I agree entirely that the workman while he contributes to the root cause must accept his full share of the responsibility, and that if he breaks the laws which he has contributed to make he should be punished. ("Hear, hear.") Personally I would be prepared to hand over to justice without the slightest reserve any workman who indulged in the outrages complained of. For while the system of private property exists, then private property must be protected. (*Murmurs of approval and "Hear, hear."*) But it will be remembered that at the very inception of this trouble I ventured to suggest that the introduction of the forces of the Crown was not necessary, except in the imagination of some of the members of the Bench who are both directly and indirectly interested in the present dispute; and whose promptings were not altogether of a judicial character.

MOGG (*rising*). To a point of order. My Lord



Mayor, is it in order to accuse us of being "interested persons" ?

A VOICE. What about himself ?

CUNLIFFE. It is sheer hypocrisy for any of us, even your lordship, to claim to have an impartial mind on this question. I do not even exempt myself. There is not a man here to-day, except perhaps our worthy stipendiary, in a position to be impartial, and even he, without any reflection, is dependent for his salary on the majority of us here who are members of the City Council. We are, in fact, as your lordship very pertinently puts it, either employers of labour, business men whose goods are held up, or trade unionists who are holding up the goods, and so this meeting which has begun in a farce may possibly end in a tragedy. Your lordship, I will detain you no longer. I trust I have made my position clear.

MOGG (*rising excitedly*). You have, without a doubt. Your lordship, I move the question be now put.

LORD MAYOR (*rising*). All in favour of the amendment. (*Hands up.*) Against the amendment.

CLERK (*reads out the result*). For the amendment, seven against one.

LORD MAYOR. This is all the business for to-day, gentlemen.

*(The MAGISTRATES file out of the room, leaving only the CHAIRMAN and CUNLIFFE, the latter looking for his hat, which has gone astray.)*

*Having found it he is leaving, when the LORD MAYOR, with the MAGISTRATES' CLERK who is looking at some documents, calls to CUNLIFFE.)*

*(Rises and crosses to CUNLIFFE.)* I say, Cunliffe, wait a moment.

CUNLIFFE *(pauses on the threshold of the door)*. Yes, my lord.

LORD MAYOR. If I can be of any assistance to you in bringing this unhappy business to a close, you can command me. *(Rising from his seat.)*

CUNLIFFE *(pausing in doorway)*. I am obliged to your lordship, but your lordship and your colleagues have to-day made that for the time impossible.

LORD MAYOR *(pausing to think, and after a few moments looking at CUNLIFFE meaningly)*. You mean——?

CUNLIFFE. Exactly, your lordship. Good afternoon.

*Quick Curtain.*

ACT II.

SCENE II.

*Same as Act I., Scene I.*

MISS VAUGHAN *discovered typing, her note-book with shorthand notes as before is on the table, from which she is transcribing shorthand notes. Her jacket is on the back of the chair folded inside out and from the inner pocket a long blue envelope protrudes.*

*Enter WARING.*

WARING. Is Mr. Cunliffe in ?

MISS V. (*curtly*). Yes.

WARING. Can I see him ?

MISS V. I'll ask him (*rises, and in doing so disturbs coat on back of chair which falls on floor unnoticed by her*).

(*Exit door L.*)

WARING (*goes over hastily to coat, picks it up, sees envelope, takes it out of pocket—it is not sealed—extracts letter, reads it; with a sardonic smile puts letter in his pocket; takes a sheet of plain paper from desk; puts this in enve-*

*lope, and thrusts it hastily back into coat pocket; puts coat on back of chair as MISS VAUGHAN enters).*

MISS V. Mr. Cunliffe is too busy to see you at present; but if it is urgent, he says you may call back in ten minutes.

WARING. Tell Mr. Cunliffe from me my time is as precious as his. Tell him it'll take more than ten minutes to keep another engagement, but I'll come back all right, perhaps before he wants me. *(Exit.)*

MISS V. *(Sits down; takes envelope from coat pocket; reads address "To the Right Hon. the President, Board of Trade," puts it up to face caressingly).* My hero, should the worst come to the worst this shall save you from yourself and them. *(Puts it back hastily as CUNLIFFE is heard closing outer door. Enter Cunliffe from door, left).*

CUNLIFFE. Hello, has he gone.

MISS V. Yes.

CUNLIFFE. Is he coming back?

MISS V. No.

CUNLIFFE. Anything wrong?

MISS V. Yes, Waring was impertinent.

CUNLIFFE *(strongly)*. The hound, what did he say to you?

MISS V. O, it wasn't to me, it was to you.

CUNLIFFE *(laughingly)*. O, is that all? My dear girl, I'm obliged to you, but bless you, such impertinence, and from such a source, were it not for its monotony, is part of the spice of my position. You must cultivate a

sense of humour. Come now, let's get to work and forget all about him.

(MISS VAUGHAN *seats herself at table notebook in hand.*)

CUNLIFFE (*taking up correspondence, reads*) The National and International Association of Violin, 'Cello, Bass instrument, String makers and Organ-builders (*pauses and looks at MISS VAUGHAN*). What a stupendous title. (MISS VAUGHAN *smiles.*) I see you have some sense of humour. (*Dictating to Miss Vaughan.*)

Dear Sir,

In reply to your invitation to meet you in public debate on the question of my alleged betrayal of the proletariat and my denunciation of Syndicalism, I have not made up my mind definitely. My present inclination is, however, to meet you publicly accompanied by the only argument which in my opinion meets the case, *viz.*, a horse whip composed of as many strands of the material of your trade as money can procure. I must, however, decline to fix any particular date for the operation.

DUNNE (*enters with correspondence and lays it on table*). I beg your pardon. Some important letters from the branches.

CUNLIFFE (*reading letter one*). At a mass meeting of No. 2 Branch the following resolution was unanimously adopted, proposed by Waring, seconded by Grubb: That this mass meeting strongly condemns the action of the

General Secretary of the National Quayside Workers' Union in Great Britain and Ireland in refusing to grant strike pay to the members of this branch in their endeavour to secure from the Capitalist class the full result of their labour, calls upon him to explain his conduct, and to resign his position as General Secretary forthwith.

*(Taking letter two and reading.)* That this mass meeting of No. 11 Branch strongly condemns the action of the General Secretary for not devoting the whole of his time to the business of the Union, and hereby calls upon him to resign his position as J.P. and City Councillor, as in our opinion the time has at length arrived when the Capitalist class should be avoided, and the industrial workers of the world should unite.

*(Reading letter three.)* That this mass meeting of No. 13 Branch strongly condemns our General Secretary and considers the time has now arrived—*(Picks the rest of the letters up and looking at DUNNE.)* I suppose that all are the same?

DUNNE. Practically—yes.

CUNLIFFE. Has Mr. Maddocks been here this morning?

DUNNE. Yes, sir. He's here now, waiting.

CUNLIFFE. Let him come in. *(To MISS VAUGHAN)*  
That will do for the present.

*(MISS VAUGHAN rises and leaves her note-book on the table. MADDOCKS meets her as she is going out.)*

MADDOCKS. (*To R. of table.*) Well, you old fossil, what's the trouble?

CUNLIFFE. You're the trouble.

MADDOCKS. What do you mean?

CUNLIFFE. I mean that you are not playing the game. You promised when we agreed to see this matter through, to work on ordinary trade union lines, and drop your syndicalism for the time being.

MADDOCKS. And I've kept my promise.

CUNLIFFE. You think so? (*Throwing him over the letters.*) (MADDOCKS *sits R. of table.*) Then how do you account for this—and this—and this? Who is responsible for the strike of railwaymen against the advice of their Executive? The stoppage of the tramway men? The scavengers and the string instrument makers? What have they got to do with our quarrel?

MADDOCKS. What, nothing to do with us! Why, we shall hit them in the solar plexus, my boy; paralyse 'em, tie 'em up, show 'em the solidarity of the industrial workers, my boy. (CUNLIFFE *rises, moves over above table to down R.C.*) Nothing to do with our quarrel! Why, you old fossil, they *are* our quarrel! Why, the more we get out the better for us. Wait till you see. We shall have the gasworkers out next, and the town in darkness, my boy. They'll settle with us quickly enough, depend upon it.

CUNLIFFE (*with withering scorn*). Wait till you see. The town in darkness. 'Pon my soul, you're incorrigible.

Why, man, you can't see beyond the end of your nose. What in the name of heaven are you going to do with these men when you get them out? How are you going to keep them? Those who belong to organisations are acting without the consent of their central body, and are not entitled to dispute pay. Some of them do not belong to any organisation, and all of them are an excited, undisciplined rabble. And this is your idea of solidarity! (*Fiercely.*) D——n it, man, (*up to back then down R.C.*) don't you see that if we begin in confusion we're bound to end in disaster?

MADDOCKS (*reassuringly*). (*Rising, goes to CUNLIFFE.*) Come, old chap, don't be so pessimistic. Why, the thing can't last a day with the whole town idle. They'll be glad to settle with us. And then, just think of it! We shall organise the unorganised, and put in their demands.

CUNLIFFE. 'Pon my soul, Tom, if I didn't know you I should doubt your honesty. As it is I must question your sanity. Why, do you imagine for a moment that, having inflamed these men's passions, or at least raised their expectations, you are going to be able to order them in again at your own sweet will without any recompense? Let me remind you that when we agreed to enter upon this fight, it was on the understanding only that the seamen should be helped, but that it should stop at that. But there is positively no finality to your policy.

MADDOCKS. Now, look here, don't be borrowing



trouble. I stake my word that when we get a settlement they'll all go back to work.

CUNLIFFE. Do you honestly believe that ?

MADDOCKS. I do.

CUNLIFFE. Then your faith shall be put to the test. (*Over below table to L. of it.*) (*Picking up letter off desk and handing it to him.*) Read that ! (*Stands with back to fire.*)

MADDOCKS (*reading LETTER 4*). At a specially convened meeting of the shipowners of the City to-day, it was decided to grant the application of your organisation for recognition, and the formation of a conciliation and arbitration board for the settlement of disputes ; such board to be formed at once of an equal number of both sides with the object to, as far as possible, adjust your organisation's port tariff affecting wages and conditions of labour, subject to the men's return to work pending an agreement being arrived at. (*Looking at CUNLIFFE in astonishment.*) Why, this is a miracle ! How did it come about ?

CUNLIFFE. Never mind how it came about. The question is, are you willing to act on it ?—and test your faith in Democracy by advising the men to accept it ?

MADDOCKS. Well, seeing it is practically all we are out for, yes. Of course you'll come with me ?

CUNLIFFE. Need you ask that question ? Of course I shall. My only fear is that your camp followers will prevent its acceptance.

MADDOCKS. You can leave them to me. (*Moves down R.*)

CUNLIFFE. Very well. We shall see.

(*Loud voices of KING and DUCKFIELD are heard in the outer office.*)

(DUNNE ENTERS.)

What's all that row about?

DUNNE. King and Duckfield are here, sir, as a deputation from a meeting at the docks.

CUNLIFFE. Very well. Let them come in.

(DUNNE opens the door for KING and DUCKFIELD, who ENTER with cap and hat in hand. They stand looking at CUNLIFFE as if not quite sure of their position. KING first, (DUCKFIELD follows.)

Sit down, both of you. (*They obey.*)

(DUCKFIELD sits above, KING R. of table. MADDOCKS sits R.)

(*They still look at CUNLIFFE with lowered brows.*)  
(DUNNE EXITS.)

Well, what's the matter, King; have you lost your voice between here and the outer office? You made good use of it there.

KING (*plucking up courage*). Is it any wonder? *Taking a handbill from his pocket and handing it to CUNLIFFE.* Just take a look at that.

CUNLIFFE. (*Standing L. of table.*) (*Reading.*)

## A BASE BETRAYAL.

Comrades, you are sold like a lamb to the slaughter,  
as the following copy of a letter proves.

To the President of the Board of Trade.

Right Hon. Sir,—

I am indeed grateful for your generous appreciation of my poor services, and willingly accept the appointment in your department as a relief from the everlasting turmoil of Labour disputes caused by the crass stupidity of the Democracy.

Yours obediently,

JAMES CUNLIFFE.

Comrades, this is the man you have clothed and fed, who, while fattening on your hard-earned coppers, has been secretly bargaining with the enemy to hand you over body and soul.

Let the Democracy whom he libels arise like an avalanche from the mountain tops. Let it crush beneath its iron heel this viperous snake in the grass, which is barring the progress of the flood-gates of Democracy walking hand-in-hand with our ultimate goal.

## DOWN WITH THE TRAITOR.

(MADDOCKS, *who has tried to restrain himself during the reading, now lies back in the chair and indulges in loud laughter, while CUNLIFFE looks at him and smiles.*)

KING. Beg pardon, sir, but this is no laughing matter. The men are simply wild about it, and have sent us here for an explanation.

MADDOCKS. I beg your pardon, King, and yours too, Cunliffe, but (*going off again*) 'pon my soul, I couldn't help it.

CUNLIFFE (*moving over to R.C.*). Your mirth was contagious ; but, as King says, this has its serious side. Have these been distributed, King ?

KING. In thousands all over the docks. That toe-rag of a Waring is holding meetings denouncing you.

CUNLIFFE. H'm, I thought I recognised the cloven hoof. Well, and what have the meetings been doing about it, King ?

KING. Why, they've passed resolutions demanding your resignation.

CUNLIFFE. And then sent you here to ask for an explanation ! And this is your Democracy, O Brutus !

KING. Oh no, sir. It was not the meeting sent us, was it, Duckfield ? It was some of the men who want you to deny it or explain.

CUNLIFFE. And may I count you and Duckfield among the faithful ?

DUCKFIELD. Well, sir, it's like this 'ere. I believe in putting things to the general body. (*Mournfully, as if his faith in the general body is somewhat weakened.*) Not as I altogether agree with the general body in this. But some of us thought as if how you would put your (*rises*) version to the general body, and the general

body agreed—Why, then—well, in course—there you are.

CUNLIFFE. A very wise and non-committal statement, Duckfield. What's your opinion, King?

(DUCKFIELD *sits again.*)

KING. I agree with Duckfield. Well, sir, at first I was simply knocked all of a heap, in manner of speaking, but you mustn't mind Duckfield. It's the natur of the baste. Why, sir, me and him was nearly skull-dragged for taking your part. Speakin' as man to man, I never had any doubt but as how you could explain the whole thing. To my mind, sir, Waring is at the bottom of it.

CUNLIFFE. I suppose we could get a meeting, King?

KING. *Get a meeting!* (*Laughs.*) Why, bless your heart, you can't avoid 'em.

CUNLIFFE. Then you may say that I'll attend the meetings to ram the lie down the throats of the curs who issued this forgery.

KING. What do you mean to say, sir——?

CUNLIFFE. Simply that I never wrote any such letter or anything approaching such a letter.

KING. (*Excitedly. Rising.*) Hurrah, by gob! (*Slapping his cap down on the floor.*) I could have sworn it, and ye'll tell the meeting so?

CUNLIFFE. Certainly I will, if the meeting will listen to me, but it is not always easy to overtake a lie even with the general body.

KING. Holy smoke, but there's going to be fun!

(*Smacks DUCKFIELD on back.*) Come along, Duckfield, ma bucko. (*With a wink at MADDOCKS.*) The plank of progress is now ripe for plucking.

(*Rising to go. Moves up to door.*)

DUCKFIELD (*rising*). Beg pardon, but the general body—

CUNLIFFE. Well, what does the general body want now?

DUCKFIELD. Well, in a manner o' speakin' they passed a resolution that the time has now arrived for Solidarity, not to go in till the railwaymen and others get what they want.

CUNLIFFE (*looking at MADDOCKS*). Well, are you still prepared to test your faith?

MADDOCKS. Yes. (*To KING and DUCKFIELD.*) (*Moving over below table to L.*) Go ahead, you chaps, and get the boys together. (*To CUNLIFFE.*) Are you ready?

(*DUCKFIELD and KING Exit.*)

CUNLIFFE. Yes.

DUNNE. Can you spare a moment, sir.

MADDOCKS. I'll wait for you. (*Exit.*)

CUNLIFFE. Well, Dunne, what is it?

DUNNE (*producing Miss Vaughan's notebook*). I'm afraid, sir, I've been a bit of a cad, but my anxiety for yourself must be my excuse.

CUNLIFFE. I don't understand, surely your loyalty is not in question.

DUNNE. No, sir. But, as you know, I've been suspicious of Miss Vaughan, and so I took her short-

hand book that she left on the desk a little while ago, and went through it. Here it is (*producing book*).

CUNLIFFE. Well, my dear Dunne, I'm still in the dark.

DUNNE. Just a moment, sir. You know I'm a bit of an expert at reading shorthand (CUNLIFFE *nods*). Well, I found here in Miss Vaughan's book, in shorthand, an exact copy of the letter from the President of the Board of Trade. Here it is transcribed. (*Hands him the transcript.*)

MISS V. (*appears at door, C., pauses on seeing DUNNE*)  
I beg your pardon.

CUNLIFFE. You may leave us, Dunne. (MISS VAUGHAN *goes over to table, looks among the papers.*)

CUNLIFFE. What are you looking for?

MISS V. My notebook.

CUNLIFFE. Is this it? (*holding it out to her.*)

MISS V. Yes, please (*holding out her hand for it*).

CUNLIFFE. Just a minute (*pause*). Please sit down.

MISS V. *looking dazed, sits slowly down on the opposite side of the desk to CUNLIFFE, who also takes a seat facing her and leans his elbows on table.*

CUNLIFFE. (*Producing notebook, turned down at the place and the written transcription by DUNNE.*) Is this a correct transcription of that page?

MISS V. Yes.

CUNLIFFE. Is it yours?

MISS V. Yes. But why——?

CUNLIFFE. Why did you do this?

MISS V. Why do you ask ?

CUNLIFFE. Because of this. (*Handing her over the handbill issued by WARING.*)

MISS V. (*looking at handbill with horror, slowly buries her head in her hands and sobs hysterically.*)

CUNLIFFE. (*The truth suddenly dawning upon him.*) My God, woman, you don't mean, surely, that this is your work ? (*MISS V., without raising her head, nods, and still sobs hysterically.*)

CUNLIFFE. (*Rising and pacing backwards and forwards. Pauses opposite to her.*) Have you nothing to say ? Just think, woman ; you came into my life late in the day. For until a few days ago I was wedded to my profession and the cause I have devoted my life to. It occupied my whole thoughts, you were my only romance. I had reached middle age without one. I had begun to love my chains and to look forward to some happiness as relief from the turmoil. Instead of which you add to my trouble by betraying me to my enemies.

MISS V. (*distressed*). Let me explain.

CUNLIFFE. I've got to explain to the men. (*She catches him by the arm as he is going out, he shakes her off.*) Let me go. (*Scornfully.*) You almost make me loathe your sex. (*Sternly.*) Stay there and enjoy your miserable work.

MADDOCKS (*at door*). Now, Cunliffe, are you ready ?

CUNLIFFE (*taking hat off peg*). Yes—now for our Waterloo. (*Exit.*)

*Curtain.*



### ACT III.

SCENE.—*The Strike Committee's Rooms near the Docks.*

INTERIOR.—*At the back are two windows looking into a square below, and doors right and left.*

*The door on the right leads into a room used for the purpose of clerical work, and for the President's use.*

*The door on the left is the entrance from the street below.*

*In the middle of the room is a large table littered with papers, handbills, copies of strike posters; some of which are hung around the walls between advertisement pictures of ocean liners.*

*Chairs and ordinary wooden forms complete the furniture.*

*As the Curtain Rises three pickets just off duty are seated; one has his leg thrown across the corner of the table, and is charging a clay pipe that has seen much service. He has just completed cutting his pipe charge from the remnant of his thick twist, holding*

*the knife (a murderous weapon) between the thumb and first finger of the right hand, rubbing the tobacco in the palm of his left hand with the ball of the right. The other looks wistfully at the operation.*

*The hum of voices comes through the open windows from the men waiting in the street below, which rises to a clamour as someone approaches.*

*A Voice is heard exclaiming :—*

A VOICE. Here's King. Hello, King, any news?

OTHER VOICES. Aye, let's have it, King. What is it to be? Ye'll get nothing from him, he's one of the Committee. Aye, one of the knuts. *(Groans and boos.)*

KING *(off)*. Ye're right, tin whiskers. Ye'll get nothing from me just now, but I'll promise something you won't like when this job is over.

*(Boos and groans follow this speech, as KING comes into the room, slamming the door after him and looking round at his mates.)*

FIRST DOCKER *(rises.)* Well, King, how did the meetin' come off?

KING *(disgustedly)*. There wasn't any meetin'.

*(THIRD DOCKER comes down L.C.)*

SECOND DOCKER. No meetin'! Why, we met thousands going to it!

KING. Yes, there were thousands all right, but no meetin'. *(Shrugging his shoulders.)* There was hell instead. 'Ere, give me a draw o' the pipe to take the taste of it away. *(Sits on lower end of L. of table.)*

(FIRST DOCKER *takes his pipe out of his mouth, cleans the stem on the sleeve of his coat, and hands it to him reluctantly.*

(KING *takes it, puts it into his mouth, takes it out again, looks into the bowl, and looks reproachfully at its owner, puts his finger and thumb into his vest pocket, scrapes the tobacco dust out and puts it in the bowl of the pipe.*)

Boys, it was simply hell—hell wid the lid off. Maddocks tried to get a hearing, but they wouldn't listen to him. He stated the employers' terms, but the crowd, after hearing that the railwaymen and all the others who came out after us were not included, howled him down. "You've sold us," they yelled. Cunliffe tried next and fared worse. "What about the fat job ye've got from the Board of Trade?" yelled one fellow, and the crowd cried "Traitor!" Cunliffe stood his ground like a man and appealed for a fair hearing. "Ye're minds have been poisoned," sez he, during a lull in the storm, "and I'm here to ram the lie down the liar's throat." "We'll hang for ye yet," shouts one fellow. "Down wid the traitor," sez another. Then there was a free fight round the lorry from which we were speakin', and an ugly rush made for Maddocks and Cunliffe and myself. Me and a few of the boys round the platform had to fight like hell to get 'em out safe. I lost sight o' them in the scrimmage and came along here. And at the corner of the next street (*shaking his head and speaking mournfully*) I saw "Cough no

more," the quack doctor, making a pitch to sell his lozenges by denouncing Maddocks, Cunliffe and the Strike Committee in the name of Solidarity.

*(Looking up, his eye catches the "Solidarity posters" on the wall. He rushes over to R. and pulls them down, tears them across, rolls them up in a ball and kicks them into a corner of the room. The others look on with amazement.)*

*(CONNOLLY goes up to back.)*

*(There is another commotion outside. Some of the crowd cheer, others boo and groan as MADDOCKS and CUNLIFFE enter the room.)*

*(REILLY up and CONOLLY up and meet at back C.)*

CUNLIFFE *(looking at KING and smiling)*. Well, King, you've got away with a whole skin?

KING *(sulkily)*. Yes, sir.

MADDOCKS *(who has taken a seat near the table L.)*. Yes, and we may thank you, King, that we were as lucky.

*(CUNLIFFE over above table to KING R.C.)*

KING *(sharply)*. You're much luckier than you think. As I came away, the crowd who, a few days ago, carried your photos on the top of a stick and shouted "Maddocks and Solidarity," were tearing 'em up and cursing you.

MADDOCKS *(laughs)*. All in the day's work, my boy. They'll come round all right by and by.

*(KING is about to reply.)*

CUNLIFFE. King, will you and the boys go and hunt

the Committee up and tell them the President, Mr. Maddocks, wants to meet them at once.

(KING and OTHERS over below table to L.)

(To SECOND DOCKER). Act as tyler at the door outside and let no one in but the Committee.

(They go out, followed by KING, who buries his hands in his pockets and shrugs his shoulders.)

(CONOLLY waits outside door L.)

MADDOCKS (looking after him). What's come over King?

CUNLIFFE (going over and picking up the ball of paper and unrolling it, comes to below table, and places two halves on the table.) This will perhaps explain. King's faith in Solidarity has received a rude shock. Well, what is your opinion of the day's proceedings? Is your faith in the mob as great as ever? (Sits on table.)

MADDOCKS. Is it quite fair, Cunliffe, do you think, to put the whole blame of to-day's proceedings down to me? Don't you think the Board of Trade letter had something to do with it?

CUNLIFFE. My dear Maddocks, I'm not putting the whole of it down to you, or, in fact, any of it. Neither am I concerned about the actual cause. It probably is owing to the libel in connection with myself. The point I want to drive home to you is that the mob, which calls itself Democracy, is a bigger tyrant and a greater despot than the Capitalist system it so vigorously denounces, with the additional disadvantage that it is an unmitigated ass into the bargain.

MADDOCKS. Rather a strong indictment, isn't it?

CUNLIFFE. Not a bit stronger than true. The Capitalist system is highly and efficiently organised; so efficiently that it can afford to treat the general public with the utmost contempt, though its very existence depends upon it. (*Moves over to R.C. turns*). You talk about your industrial commune. Why, man, where's your material for it? Would you pit the mob we faced to-day against the highly disciplined Capitalist system of to-day with any chance of permanent success? That the system is cruel, I admit, That it is void of conscience may also be true, but its cruelty is scientifically administered for its own benefit (*to R. of table*) while the cruelty of the Democracy is only directed against itself, and its greatest danger lies in the fact that it is not conscious of what it is doing. (*Rises.*)

MADDOCKS. Aye, now you hit the mark, unconsciously perhaps, but you hit it. Class consciousness is what they're short of. My policy is to teach them to know it.

CUNLIFFE. (*Moves R. then to above R. of table*). So long as you confine yourself to teaching it there is not much danger to them. It is only when you attempt to apply it or work out the policy with material utterly unfit for the job that you come a cropper. (*Contemptuously*). Why, man alive, just consider the odds against you! Here we are up against a system which is the growth of centuries, managed and run by men with private enterprise in their blood, for it becomes heredi-

tary by the practice of ages. It is fortified by the keenest intellect money can procure, developed under advantages denied to the working classes.

MADDOCKS. Yes, but there *are* geniuses among the working classes; you will admit that, Cunliffe?

CUNLIFFE. Here and there, yes; a genius does arise in spite of all obstacles, for the rude school of experience, to a man of that class, is the best possible education. (*Mournfully*). But his evolution is, either he is captured by the Capitalist who makes it worth his while, and with the fear of the future one can hardly blame him, or he becomes a trade union secretary managing shillings where the Capitalist manages millions of pounds. (*Up to back C.*) Or a fanatic idealist surrounded by a handful of mediocrities who get up draws, and run whist drives, and bazaars—the very antipodes of their ideals. (*Savagely*.) And then when a crisis such as the present comes, what is the result? (*Down to above table.*) Why, we hold meetings at which the idealist scores every time, by appealing to the passions instead of the reason of the audience. We give our case away to the Capitalist, who holds no meetings, wastes no idle words, but who silently and scientifically puts his Juggernaut in motion which crushes the life out of us eventually.

MADDOCKS. We do a bit of crushing meanwhile.

CUNLIFFE. Yes, we live our miserable hour, have our photographs shown in the Capitalist press, and see them carried sky high in processions. And then we find we have let loose forces that should never have been loosed

—forces that were not ready—we begin to see the folly of it all and try to stem it and find it is too late.

*(Sits R. of table.)*

MADDOCKS. Not too late.

CUNLIFFE. We see what King saw yesterday—the fickle mob following the first swashbuckler who comes along.

MADDOCKS *(who had been impressed by the speech)*. 'Pon my soul, you almost convince me that you are right. But I confess I'm a partisan, nay, a fanatic, if you like. I also confess that to-day's business has an ugly look, but it is merely an incident and will pass away. I recognise the faults of the rank and file as well as you, but with all their faults, they are as nothing compared with the cause. And I love them in spite of their faults, and will stick to them, as I know you will, to the end. *(Rises, over to CUNLIFFE, puts his hand on his shoulder. Below table.)* So let us make up our minds to fight it out.

CUNLIFFE. Your estimate of me is correct. I shall stick to them to the end. All I am anxious about is what shape that end may take. And don't forget, whatever it may be, we shall be held responsible for it. As to their faults, why, they only endear them to me, but I have another name for them—stupidity. Do you think for a moment that I don't admire their fighting spirit. *(Rise.)* Yet, that is their greatest fault all the same. Properly controlled and disciplined, the fault could become a virtue. And we shall have to make a virtue of it.

MADDOCKS. That is a bit paradoxical, isn't it? How are you going to manage it?



CUNLIFFE. By saving them from themselves, and signing the agreement offered by the employers. You talk about fighting it out to the bitter end! How are you fighting it? The only means by which you could be successful is to stop supplies. And yet you are giving out permits for the safe convoy of supplies!

MADDOCKS. Yes, I know, but it is only for hospitals, and dread for our own people.

CUNLIFFE. My dear fellow, don't you see how hopeless your whole theory is? Do the Capitalists consider our people when they lock them up? Are not the patients in the hospitals the outcome of the Capitalist system? If you want bread for the people, you also want coal to bake it, carts to cart the flour to the mill, coal to drive the machinery. Isn't that the whole case of the other side?

MADDOCKS. Yes, but we are acting on the red cross rules.

CUNLIFFE. Yes, and the enemy are firing on your red cross.

MADDOCKS. What do you mean?

CUNLIFFE (*taking a paper out of his pocket and handing it to him*). Read that—a special article denouncing your impudence, with your photo handing out permits in the Committee room.

(*While MADDOCKS is reading DUNNE enters followed by KING down L.*)

DUNNE (*to L.C.*). The Committee is waiting outside, Sir. (*Move over above table to R.C.*)

CUNLIFFE. Well, what do you say? Are you with

me in ending this business by signing this agreement?

MADDOCKS. We'll see what the Committee says.

CUNLIFFE. The Committee will say what we say, if you back me up. And if you don't, the men will go back beaten in a day or two.

MADDOCKS. Tell the Committee to come in, King.  
(KING goes off L.)

DUNNE. Can I have a few words in private with you, sir? It is very important.

CUNLIFFE. Certainly, Dunne, come along.

*(They go off by the door to the R. marked Private.)*

*(The Committee headed by KING and DUCKFIELD enter the room, they seat themselves round the table silently. REILLY, DOBSON, DUCKFIELD over below table to his seat above R. KING to seat above L. of table.)*

MADDOCKS. We shall want a tyler for the door. Who will volunteer?

KING. Ripe o's on the door, Sir.

*[MADDOCKS looks surprised at the designation.]*

DUCKFIELD. He means Conolly. That's his nickname on account of his face being red.

MADDOCKS. That's all right, then we'll get to business. Any reports to make? *(They all look at each other without answering.)* Why, what's the matter, all of you?

DUCKFIELD. Mr. Chair, through you. It's the general body. They wants to know what about strike pay.

*(Knock on door L. CONOLLY opens door.)*

TYLER (*enters*). Mr. Chair, through you. There's a lady from the 'orspitals wants to see you.

MADDOCKS. Let her come in.

(*A woman in a nurse's uniform enters and stands at the door.*)

(*Rises.*) Well, madam, what can we do for you? Give the lady a chair, King. (*Sits.*)

(*KING rises, brings his own chair for the lady, then gets chair from back. Sits.*)

NURSE. I came to see if you would give me a permit for coal for the sterilised milk.

MADDOCKS. Why, you got one yesterday.

NURSE. That was for the milk. We want coal to drive the engine.

MADDOCKS. And carts to cart the coal?

NURSE. Yes.

MADDOCKS. And carters to drive the horses?

NURSE. Yes, please, and we want bread and drugs which are lying at the railway stations, as we are running short.

(*CUNLIFFE enters with papers in his hand and stands looking on.*)

MADDOCKS. Sorry to disappoint you, but we have decided to issue no more permits.

NURSE (*surprised*). Not issue any more——?

DUCKFIELD (*rises*). Beg pardon, Mr. Maddocks, but the general body——

MADDOCKS (*looking at DUCKFIELD meaningly*). The general body has altered its mind.

(DUCKFIELD *who is inclined to protest catches CUNLIFFE'S eye, who puts his hand on his shoulder, sinks into his seat with a look of blank amazement.*)

NURSE (*to CUNLIFFE*). But surely, Mr. Cunliffe, you see the seriousness of this? (*Pleadingly.*) You surely wouldn't deprive the inmates of the hospitals of the necessities of life?

CUNLIFFE. (*Comes down below R. of table.*) Madam, Mr. Maddocks is the President of the Committee. I cannot interfere if I would. As it happens I agree with him. We are at war with Society. There are in consequence more people deprived of necessities than are in hospital.

NURSE (*very much perturbed*). Yes, I know, but what are we to do?

MADDOCKS. Ask the editors of your newspapers.

CUNLIFFE. Or appeal to the police and military.

NURSE. We have, but they say they are busy elsewhere.

CUNLIFFE. They are mistaken. Editors say they can control the food distribution and the Press can't lie.

(*Moves up.*)

NURSE (*rises*). But surely——?

MADDOCKS. Madam, our decision is final. And now you will excuse us, we have important business to transact.

NURSE. (*Rising, gripping the back of the chair, holding out one hand appealingly to the members of the Committee, who hang their heads, drops her hands despairingly, goes*

*towards the door, turns as she goes out and exclaims fiercely—*) You inhuman brutes! *(Exit.)*

*(KING takes his chair to back.)*

DUCKFIELD. But, Mr. Chair, through you I rises to a point of order. About these 'ere permits, didn't the general body decide—

MADDOCKS. Oh, d—— your general body. You and it are too slow to attend your own funerals. The matter is decided; let's get to business.

*(DUCKFIELD, still on his feet, looks around for assistance, and not getting it, sinks slowly into his seat murmuring, "It's not right. It's not democratic.")*

*(Angry voices are heard outside, the toot toot of a motor car and the throbbing of an engine, as it pulls up is heard amidst the booing of a crowd. Loud knocking at the door, and the voice of the doorkeeper exclaiming—)*

DOORKEEPER. I don't give a d—— if it is the Lord Mayor or even the King; he is not going in here unless I get instructions.

CUNLIFFE *(to FIRST DOCKER)*. See what the noise is about. Open the door.

*(FIRST DOCKER rises, goes to the door and unlocks it.)*

*(DOORKEEPER enters and exclaims—)*

DOORKEEPER. The Lord Mayor wants to see the Committee.

*(Angry protests from the members.)*

MEMBERS. We'll not have him here. What does he want ?

CUNLIFFE (*to DOORKEEPER*). Let the Lord Mayor in.  
(*They hesitate.*)

(*Sternly.*) Do you hear what I say ?

FIRST DOCKER (*flinging the door open sulkily*). There ye are, and much good may it do him. (*Returns. Sits above table, L. of it.*)

(*The LORD MAYOR enters hat in hand and bows courteously, to which there is no response, but dead silence,*)

LORD MAYOR (*addressing CUNLIFFE*). I understand, Cunliffe, you have withdrawn the permits to the hospitals.

CUNLIFFE. Your Lordship is correctly informed.

LORD MAYOR. But, surely, you do not intend this to be permanent ? What about the red cross rules ?

CUNLIFFE. They no longer exist, your Lordship. Your own side have grossly violated them.

LORD MAYOR. How . . . I don't understand.

CUNLIFFE. Your Lordship has evidently not read the morning's papers.

LORD MAYOR. Well, to tell the truth, Cunliffe, I have not. You and your friends give me little time for anything just now. But what is it you mean ?

CUNLIFFE. Will your Lordship just glance at this.

(*Moves over to below table. Hands him the morning paper containing the attack on the Committee.*)

LORD MAYOR (*reading amidst dead silence*). How

d—d stupid! But surely you have more humanity than to take notice of this? Think of the misery you are causing to the helpless people in the hospitals. Why, man, you may be the cause of many deaths! Can you not rise above such petty considerations? I am disappointed in you, Cunliffe, grievously disappointed!

CUNLIFFE. I am sorry to disappoint your Lordship, just as I disagree with your deductions, but the responsibility does not rest with us any longer. Your Lordship and your colleagues have invoked the aid of the forces of the Crown to defeat us. Your colleagues and the Press have denounced our humanitarian efforts to relieve the hospitals. You have, in fact, fired upon our red cross. It is now up to you to fill the vacancy.

LORD MAYOR. Yes, but we are not equal to the occasion, Cunliffe. I confess it. We should require the whole army to fulfil the requirements of the City. You know I have every sympathy with you and would willingly end this unfortunate business if I could, but these suffering people in the hospitals, remember they are your own class, not ours.

CUNLIFFE. I do not forget, your Lordship. In fact they haunt me like a nightmare, just as the unfortunate people outside the hospitals do—those that the hospitals have given up as a bad job. For instance, let me give your Lordship one or two examples. (*Looking round*). Reilly?

(REILLY comes down R. of table, steps forward.

*He is a man of nearly six feet, straight as*

*an arrow, but thin and spare in frame. He has a patch over the left eye.)*

Your Lordship. Reilly was a soldier. He fought through three severe campaigns. Your Lordship, as a soldier, will appreciate that fact. (His LORDSHIP *nods sympathetically*). The last was the South African campaign, in which he lost his eye. He had, with the foolishness of his class, married an old sweetheart, a widow with two children, who were in an industrial school, before he went. In marrying he took over the legal responsibility of his predecessor as well as the good lady's affection. And as a reward for his patriotism, he was arrested when landing here and lodged in prison until the arrears of industrial school fees, which had accumulated during his absence, were paid. He is going to jail periodically, first for one child and then for the other. And there are many more in a similar position.

FIRST DOCKER. That's the God Almighty's truth, your Lordship.

CUNLIFFE (*continuing*). Reilly, except when men are scarce, is denied the opportunity of earning his living at the docks, the last refuge of the unfortunate, owing to the embargo placed upon men with the slightest disability by the insurance companies.

(REILLY *goes L. and sits on form.*)

Dobson.

DOBSON (*coming forward*). Yes. (*Down R.C.*)

CUNLIFFE. Your Lordship will observe that Dobson has a slight limp caused by an accident. He got com-



pensation, it is true—half his average earnings, amounting to 12s. 6d. per week for a time. He has a family and five small children. The employer offered him light employment, and the judge in consequence reduced his compensation to one penny per week. But the Insurance Company refused to insure him except at an exorbitant rate, and the consequence is that he has now neither compensation nor employment.

LORD MAYOR (*feelingly*). My God, what a tragedy!

(DOBSON *up to back, sits.*)

CUNLIFFE. Yes, your Lordship, that is the word—a tragedy! A tragedy so tragic that it has caused the present upheaval. You cannot go on mortgaging the life-blood of the people of this country without reaping the inevitable, economic reward.

The treasured wrongs of the last fifteen years are speaking in this dispute. Your Lordship and your class have been living in a fool's paradise. Do you want any more examples?

LORD MAYOR. No, Cunliffe. Good day, gentlemen.

(*As the LORD MAYOR goes out L., enter WARING who takes his seat at the table.*)

(*WARING to above C. of table. KING above L. of table.*)

MADDOCKS. Well, now, what are the reports? What have you to say, Duckfield?

DUCKFIELD (*rises*). Well, what I sez is this 'ere—the men are getting disheartened as there's no strike pay. Our Exe-cu-tive has talked the matter over, and they

think the time has now arrived to put it to the general body.

MADDOCKS. Well, King—and yours?

KING (*rises*). I agree with Duckfield. If the strike's not settled soon, they'll all be going back on their own, but Mr. Waring has somethin' very important to say on the point. (*He beams on him again.*) 'Aven't ye, Mr. Waring? (*Sits.*)

WARING (*aggressively. Rises*). Yes, I have something very important. I agree that the men are disheartened and wavering, and will go in, but not for the same reason as that given by comrades King and Duckfield.

DUCKFIELD. 'Ere, none o' that. I'm no comrade of yours.

KING. Now then, Ducky, dear, don't be uncharitable. Let Mr. Waring tell his tale.

MADDOCKS. Yes, let us hear the worst, whatever it is.

WARING. The men are going back to work, because they have been betrayed, sold by Cunliffe. And they've found him out. (*Enter Miss VAUGHAN.*)

(*KING makes an attempt to rise, but suddenly remembers and restrains himself.*)

MADDOCKS. (*Stops CUNLIFFE who is about to rise.*) Rather a strong statement, isn't it, Waring?

WARING. Not half strong enough to fit the case.

MADDOCKS. Very well, let's have your case.

WARING. Surely you've seen the manifesto issued by the men.

MADDOCKS. I've seen one signed by you denouncing Cunliffe, if that's what you mean, but that was a mere printed statement. What foundation have you for issuing it?

WARING. I have the original document quoted in the printed statement, if you doubt my word.

MADDOCKS. Aye, that's much better. Can I see it?

WARING (*eagerly*). Yes, with pleasure.

*(Takes a bundle of papers from his pocket and begins to sort them out, during which one drops on the floor and is picked up by KING unseen by WARING. The latter takes one from the rest, opens it and looks at it.)*

There you are. You can read it for yourself. (*Sits.*)

MADDOCKS (*taking letter and perusing it*). H'm—  
Yes, it seems genuine enough. Have you any objection to Mr. Cunliffe seeing it?

WARING. Not if you guarantee its return.

*(CUNLIFFE rises hastily.)*

MADDOCKS. Easy now, Cunliffe. Rather a peculiar position for you to take up seeing the letter, if genuine, has been certainly stolen. But I think I can promise you Mr. Cunliffe will agree to your proposition, Waring.

CUNLIFFE. (*Seeing the drift of MADDOCKS, nods his head, takes the letter and looks at it, speaking across the table.*) I suppose you took the trouble to ascertain that this letter was written by me?

WARING (*triumphantly*). I did, and I'll swear to it anywhere.

CUNLIFFE. You may have the opportunity sooner than you think. Would it surprise you to learn that I never either wrote or in fact saw the document before to-day.

WARING (*contemptuously*). You may drop that, Cunliffe. It won't wash. There's your signature; I know it too well.

CUNLIFFE (*to MADDOCKS*). Maddocks, hand me that stamp, please. (*Takes the stamp, presses it on a piece of paper and hands it to MADDOCKS.*) Compare the two, Maddocks, and see if they are not similar.

MADDOCKS. Exactly the same.

CUNLIFFE (*to WARING*). You were in possession of the fact that I had an office stamp, a facsimile of my signature.

WARING. No, I wasn't.

CUNLIFFE. Had you any acquaintance with Miss Vaughan, my typist?

WARING. I object to be cross-examined in this way. Can you deny the letter?

CUNLIFFE. Will you answer my question?

WARING (*uneasily*). I knew her slightly.

MISS V. That's a lie. You stole the letter from my coat pocket. (*Sensation.*)

CUNLIFFE. Stole it—why—then you did write it.

MISS V. Yes, I wrote it, and used your stamp signature. (*Pointing at WARING.*) That Cur knew it, stole the letter and got it printed to use against you.

KING. (*Who has been reading the letter dropped by*

WARING.) And now, Mr. Chair, through you, will you read this as well?

MADDOCKS (*reading*). My dear Waring.

WARING. (*Rises excitedly.*) That's my letter. It's been stolen. I demand it back at once.

MADDOCKS. Easy, Waring. People who steal other people's letters have no right to complain if the compliment is returned.

WARING (*endeavouring to brazen it out*). I will not stay here to be badgered like this.

(*Moves towards the door, KING gets before him, locks the door and puts the key in his pocket.*)

KING. Oh, no you don't, me bucko. We can't afford to part company with you yet.

WARING. So it's a trap, is it?

(*Looks round and makes a rush for the window, when REILLY and DOBSON catch him by the collar, swing him round and throw him in a chair above table.*)

MADDOCKS (*continuing reading*). I have seen the gentleman I spoke to you about last week, and he assures me that if you can get the document you spoke about even with the stamp signature it will serve the purpose he requires. He is willing to pay a good price for it. And of course we shall share the plunder equally.

Yours truly,

John Cronin.

You dog! For two pins I'd let King have his way with you.

KING. For the love o' God, do, sir. I am just blue mouldy for the want of a row.

CUNLIFFE (*speaking from the chair on which he is sitting*). Let the cur go ; he has done his worst.

MADDOCKS. Not before we make him undo some of it. (*To WARING.*) Now take this pen and write as I dictate.

WARING. And suppose I don't ?

MADDOCKS. Then I shall let King loose.

(*KING comes forward eagerly, but is stopped by a look from MADDOCKS.*)

After that I shall advise Cunliffe to have you arrested for criminal conspiracy and forgery.

(*WARING moves to table and takes up pen, scowling.*)

Now write :—

Fellow Workers,

I find there is not the smallest foundation for the charges in the leaflet issued by me with respect to Mr. Cunliffe and the President of the Board of Trade.

(*WARING looks up and scowls. Throws pen down.*)

Go on, man, you've not finished yet : I therefore advise all my mates to accept the settlement and terms offered by the employers and return to work at once. (*Looks at CUNLIFFE.*) Signed J. Waring.

Ah, now, that's all right. (*Taking paper and handing it to KING.*) We will get 30,000 of these struck off at once and distributed. King, you see to it.

KING. My oath, but I will.

MADDOCKS. And now, Cunliffe, let's have the agreement we're all ready to sign.

DUCKFIELD. 'Ere hold on a minute. What about my general body? I must consult my general body.

MADDOCKS. For the second time to-night, d——n your general body! I tell you it's got to be done now.

CUNLIFFE. The employers must have an answer one way or the other at 5.30 (*looking at watch*). It's now 5.15. (*He hands agreement to MADDOCKS.*)

MADDOCKS (*spreading it on the table and signing it*). There I've started it . . . Now Cunliffe (*signs*). Now King and the rest of you (*they all sign in silence*).

(*Approaching voices are heard shouting. KING takes the hook out of his belt and holds it by the blade. The roar of the crowd increases.*)

VOICE No. 1 (*outside*). Let's have him out. Rush the office. (*Yells. Stone crashes through the window.*)

VOICE No. 2. That's the style. Let him have it.

VOICE No. 3. Where's Waring, good old Waring, he's our leader.

(*WARING makes a rush to the window when DOBSON and REILLY grip him, drag him away, and fling him panting into a chair, waving off KING.*)

VOICE No. 4. Boys, they've got Waring inside.

VOICE No. 1. Come on, let's have him out. They're manhandling him.

(*DUNNE enters R. Yells of vengeance from the crowd.*)

MADDOCKS. They'll be at the door in a minute and we must get this away at once.

*(He looks round mutely for some one to volunteer.)*

MISS V. *(holding out her hand, DOBSON and REILLY get down R. with WARING)*. I'll take it. They don't know me so well. *(MADDOCKS looks at CUNLIFFE.)*

CUNLIFFE. She's right. If any one can do it, she can.

MADDOCKS. King, stand by the open door for Mr. Dunne.

*(Tramp of infantry is heard and voices shouting.)*

VOICES. Look out, boys, here come the sojers.

MADDOCKS. Now, watch your chance *(looking through window)*. Now . . . now . . . open the door quick *(excitedly)*, they're scattering.

*(KING opens door, MISS V. goes out, KING slams and bolts it. MADDOCKS and CUNLIFFE watch through window. KING guards door with hook in hand.)*

She's standing still, God, why doesn't she make a run for it.

CUNLIFFE. Trust her. She'll get through all right.

MADDOCKS. They see her. *(Howls from the crowd.)* Here come the troops round the corner. *(Excitedly.)* Now, now, she's off. . . . She's doubled . . . 'em. *(Drawing away from the window with sigh of satisfaction.)* She's got through. *(Wiping forehead with handkerchief.)* It was a tight corner.

*(The sound of horses' hoofs is heard approaching.)*



VOICE No. 4 (*from crowds*). Look out, boys, 'ere's the sojers coming. (*Yells.*)

VOICE No. 3. Get together, boys. Stick tight, we're ten to one.

VOICE No. 2. They can't touch us.

VOICE No. 1. They won't fire. . . . They'll have to read the Riot Act first.

MADDOCKS. How about the inner office? Can they get through?

CUNLIFFE. I don't think so, the window is high.

*(Blows at door. CUNLIFFE takes revolver from his pocket. KING with hook still in hand stands beside him, and MADDOCKS takes office ruler in his hand.)*

*By this time cavalry and infantry have arrived outside and the order is given to halt. The crowd yell defiance at troopers.)*

LORD MAYOR (*is heard speaking to crowd below window*). Now, men, take my advice and disperse to your homes. We've no wish to resort to extremes. (*Some yells of defiance from mob.*) Very well, you compel me to use other methods.

*(Mob jeering the while.)*

CUNLIFFE (*puts revolver on table. Holding out his hand to KING*). Give me the key of the door.

*(KING hands it mechanically.)*

*(CUNLIFFE inserts key in lock.)*

MADDOCKS (*going and putting his hands on his wrist holding key*). What, in God's name, are you going to do?

(*The LORD MAYOR reading Riot Act and the crowd still yelling defiance outside.*)

LORD MAYOR. (*Proclamation under the Riot Act.*)  
Our Sovereign Lord the King chargeth and commandeth all persons being assembled immediately to disperse themselves and peaceably depart to their habitations or to their lawful business, upon the pains contained in the Act made in the first year of King George the First for preventing tumults and riotous Assemblies.

GOD SAVE THE KING.

CUNLIFFE. I'm going to persuade the men to disperse.

KING. For God's sake, sir, don't. They're ugly enough just now and will do you in.

CUNLIFFE (*shaking MADDOCKS off*). I must risk that. Here, you look after that dog there. Keep him as a hostage.

KING. Leave him to me.

(*CUNLIFFE flings open the door.*)

MADDOCKS. You really mean to go out there?

CUNLIFFE (*looking back*). I do.

MADDOCKS. Then I'm coming with you.

(*They both pass out.*)

MOB. (*Yells.*) Here's the traitor. Go for him, boys.

LORD MAYOR. Now men, you have compelled me to resort to extreme measures. Once again, I beg you to disperse.  
(*More yells of defiance.*)

CUNLIFFE (*to the men*). Boys, for your own sake, and for the wives and children, don't give them a chance to fire.

VOICE. I wish I had a gun, and I'd shoot you first. (*Cheers, shouts.*) Who sold his birthright for a Government job?

OFFICER. Make ready, attention!

CUNLIFFE (*pleadingly to LORD MAYOR*). For God's sake, sir, don't fire. (*To the men.*) Now, boys, listen to me. You can have it out with me any time.

VOICE. We'll have it out with you now. Come on, boys. They won't fire.

OFFICER. Make ready, men. (*The mob hesitate.*)

VOICE. Come on, you cowards.

KING. By God, they mean it.

OFFICER. Present! Fire!

*(The troops fire a volley. Yells of rage and pain are heard, the mob disperse, the noise dies away until all is quiet but a low murmur as someone comes to door and knocks.)*

*(REILLY closes window.)*

KING. Who's there?

MADDOCKS. It's me, Maddocks. Open the door.

*(KING throws open the door, MADDOCKS enters, followed by two Military Ambulance men bearing CUNLIFFE on a stretcher. Head to L.)*

KING. (*Over to L. stretcher.*) My God! The murderers!

(MISS V. enters, kneels down L. of stretcher, lifts CUNLIFFE'S head and holds him round the shoulders.)

(Sound of cavalry pursuing crowd dies away in distance.)

CUNLIFFE (*faintly to MISS V.*). Did you get through in time?

(MISS V. nods her head. DOCTOR enters L. moves over.)

Thanks. (*Endeavours to take her hand, but his strength failing him, it drops to the ground.*)

DOCTOR. (*Comes round to front, feeling his heart.*) You can let him down. Poor chap, his troubles are all over.

(MISS V. falls across body and sobs.)

NEWSBOYS. (*Outside. Swell and die away.*)

(DOBSON opens windows.)

NEWSBOYS. Special Evening Edition! Settlement of the Dock Strike. Special Edition! Men to resume work. Special!

(WARING, taking advantage of the situation, sneaks out through the open door. KING with his cotton hook follows him.)

*Curtain.*





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